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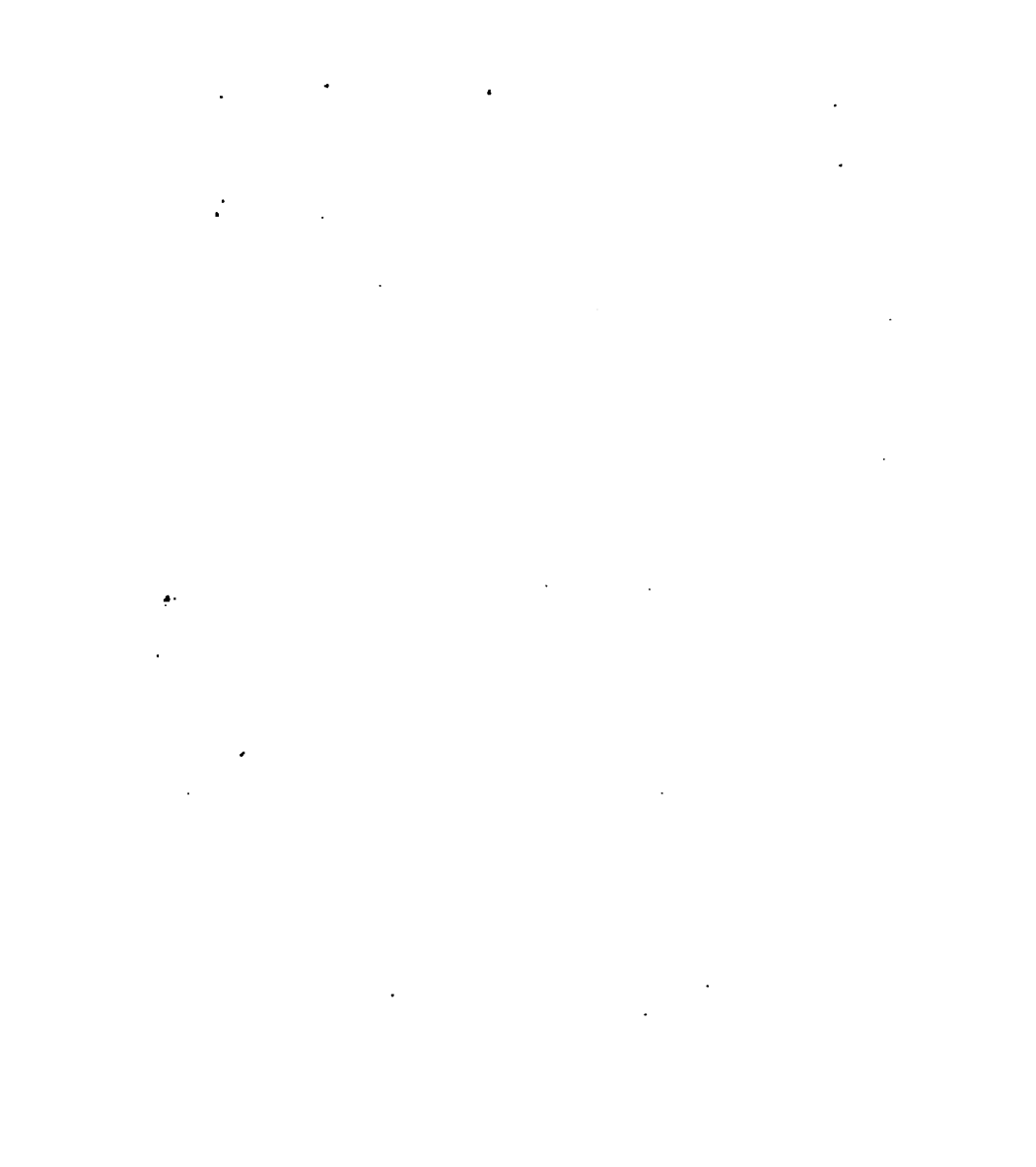
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*Quas Æsopeas, non Æsopi, nomino :
Paucas ostendit ille, ego plures dissero,
Usus vetusto genere, sed rebus novis.*

Æsopean, tho' not Æsop's, what were brief
In him, and few, writ largely; with increase
Of new things, cast within that ancient mould.

PHÆDRUS, *Prolog.* in lib. iv. Fab.

THE CAMEL IN THE WILDERNESS.

(The Necessity of Mental Prayer.)

THE camel, passing on amid ruins in the desert, whensoever he looks up into the sky, will find there a better and more cheering prospect than the barren wastes or mouldering fragments that meet his view on earth.



Mental prayer, with meditation on the eternal truths, teaches us our condition on earth as pilgrims, our relations to our Lord God, the great end for which He created us, and the means by which we must attain it.

Direct my steps according to Thy word ; and let no iniquity have dominion over me (Ps. cxviii. 133).

INTRODUCTORY.

THE NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER.

(The Camel in the Wilderness.)

(1.)

*The soul that prays is cheered on its pilgrimage,
and animated by the hope of future reward.*

‘Look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption is at hand’ (S. Luke xxi. 28).—‘My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out’ (Ps. xxxviii. 4).—‘For Thee my soul hath thirsted; for Thee my flesh, O how many ways! In a desert land, and where there is no way, and no water: so in the sanctuary have I come before Thee, to see Thy power and Thy glory’ (Ps. lxii. 2, 3).—‘Thy justifications were the subject of my song, in the place of my pilgrimage’ (cxviii. 54).—‘I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord, and Thy law is my meditation’ (*Ibid.* 174).—‘I will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart’ (Os. ii. 14).—‘Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant, and teach me Thy justifications.’ . . ‘Open Thou my eyes, and I will consider the wondrous things of Thy law.’ ‘I am a sojourner on the earth: hide not Thy commandments from me’ (Ps. cxviii. 135, 18, 19).—‘The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be simple, thy whole body will be lightsome’ (S. Matt. vi. 22).

(2.)

Mental prayer, and consideration of the truths of eternity, mortify in the soul all worldliness and sin.

‘Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul’ (1 S. Pet. ii. 11).—‘Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak’ (S. Matt. xxvi. 41).—‘The end of all is at hand. Be prudent, therefore, and watch in prayers’ (1 S. Pet. iv. 7).—‘Thy words have I hidden in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee’ (Ps. cxviii. 11).—‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God’ (Is. xl. 3).—‘Here we have no permanent city, but we seek one to come’ (Heb. xiii. 14).—‘Our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we wait for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Phil. iii. 20).—‘O that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end’ (Deut. xxxii. 29).—‘I thought upon the days of old: and I had in my mind the eternal years, and I meditated in the night with my own heart: and I swept my spirit’ (Ps. lxxvi. 6, 7).—‘In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin’ (Ecclus. vii. 40).

(3.)

Mental prayer ought to be our first daily care and exercise.

‘If thou wilt arise early to God, He will presently awake unto thee’ (Job viii. 5, 6).—‘We ought to pre-

vent the sun to bless Thee, and adore Thee at the dawning of the light' (Wisd. xvi. 28).—'If I have remembered Thee upon my bed, I will meditate on Thee in the morning' (Ps. lxi. 7).—'My soul hath desired Thee in the night; yea, and with my spirit within me in the morning, early I will watch to Thee' (Is. xxvi. 9).—'O God, my God, to Thee do I watch at break of day' (Ps. lxi. 1).—'I prevented the dawning of the day, and cried: because in Thy words I hoped greatly. My eyes to Thee have prevented the morning: that I might meditate on Thy words' (cxviii. 147, 148).—'What? could you not watch one hour with Me? Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh weak' (S. Matt. xxvi. 40, 41).

(4.)

We shall thus grow in spiritual perception, and in grace.

'Be still, and see that I am God' (Ps. xlv. 11).—'The uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast made manifest to me' (Ps. l. 8).—'I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart. I meditated also on Thy commandments, which I loved' (Ps. cxviii. 32, 47).—'The law of his God is in his heart: and his steps shall not be supplanted' (xxxvi. 31).—'Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. . . His mother kept all these words in her heart' (S. Luke ii. 19, 51).

I.

THE COCK AND THE JEWEL.

(The End of Man's Creation.)

THE poultry in a farm-yard were much disappointed, after all their scratching in the litter, to find only a jewel, instead of the grains of corn they were in search of; which would have been more valuable to them than the glittering but useless bauble.



Such prayer and consideration will show that all, however prized, is worthless, except in so far as it may conduce to that final salvation and eternal happiness, the simple and only end for which we were created and now exist.

More to be desired than gold, and many precious stones (Ps. xviii. 11).

I.

THE END OF MAN'S CREATION.

(The Cock and the Jewel.)

(1.)

One thing, and one only, is needful to us upon earth.

‘Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary: Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her’ (S. Luke x. 41, 42).—‘What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?’ (S. Matt. xvi. 26).—‘Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through, and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also’ (vi. 19-21).—‘The life is more than the food, and the body is more than the raiment’ (S. Luke xii. 23).—‘Neither do I count my life more precious than myself, so that I may consummate my course’ (Acts xx. 24).—‘What things were gain to me, those I have counted loss for Christ. But indeed, I esteem all things to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom

I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ' (Phil. iii. 7, 8).

(2.)

That one thing is most precious.

'More to be desired than gold, and many precious stones' (Ps. xviii. 11).—'With me are riches and glory, glorious riches and justice. For my fruit is better than gold and the precious stone; and my blossoms than choice silver' (Prov. viii. 18, 19).—'Blessed is the man that findeth wisdom, and is rich in prudence. The purchasing thereof is better than the merchandise of silver, and her fruit than the chiefest and purest gold. She is more precious than all riches; and all the things that are desired are not to be compared to her' (Prov. iii. 13-15).—'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field: which a man having found, hideth it, and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it' (S. Matt. xiii. 44-46).

(3.)

To secure the one end of our creation, with whatever cost, toil, or loss, is true wisdom.

'If thou shalt call for wisdom, and incline thy heart to prudence: if thou shalt seek her as money, and shalt dig for her as for a treasure: then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord, and shalt find the knowledge of God' (Prov. ii. 3-5).—'O Lord, my portion, I have

said, I would keep Thy law' (Ps. cxviii. 57).—'I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire; that thou mayest be made rich' (Apoc. iii. 18).—'He went forth, and saw a publican named Levi, sitting at the custom-house; and He saith to him: Follow Me. And leaving all things, he rose up and followed Him' (S. Luke v. 27, 28).—'By faith Moses, when he was grown up, denied himself to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter, . . esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians: for he looked unto the reward' (Heb. xi. 24-26).

(4.)

To pursue any other object is folly, and waste of time and labour.

'No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon' (S. Luke xvi. 13).—'Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which doth not satisfy you?' (Is. lv. 2).—'How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him' (3 Kings xviii. 21).—'The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and Him only shalt thou serve' (S. Matt. iv. 10).—'He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth' (S. Matt. xii. 30).—'Choose therefore life, . that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and obey His voice, and adhere to Him: for He is thy life, and the length of thy days' (Deut. xxx. 19, 20).

II.

THE EARTHEN AND THE IRON POT.

(The End of Creatures.)

AN earthen and an iron pot, floating down the stream together, were in danger of a collision that would have destroyed the weaker vessel, whose security was involved in preserving, at a safe distance, the relative position it was designed to occupy.



The end of our own creation is also that of all other creatures around us ; to use them, to be ready to serve them, or to avoid them, and all simply with reference to our great end, is at once our duty and our safeguard.

Woe to him that gainsayeth his Maker :—a sherd of the earthen pots ! (Is. xlv. 9.)

II.
THE END OF CREATURES.
(*The Earthen and the Iron Pot.*)

(1.)

The creatures that surround us, on our way to our eternal end, are placed in relation to us, as means to attain it.

‘God said: Let Us make man to Our image and likeness, and let him have dominion over the whole earth. . . And God created man to His own image: to the image of God He created him. . . And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good’ (Gen. i. 26-31).—‘Your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you’ (S. Matt. vi. 32, 33).—‘If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me’ (xix. 21).—‘And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings’ (S. Luke xvi. 9).—‘Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is all man’ (Eccles. xii. 13).—‘For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, in good works: which God hath prepared, that we should walk in them’ (Eph. ii. 10).—‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification. . . that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour’ (1 Thess. iv. 3, 4).

(2.)

No creature, therefore, is ours: all are but lent to us as means, and we are responsible for the use of them.

‘Even as a man going into a far country, called his servants, and delivered to them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one: to every one according to his proper ability.’ . . . ‘Trade till I come’ (S. Matt. xxv. 14, 15; S. Luke ‘xix. 13).—‘For who distinguisheth thee? and what hast thou that thou hast not received?’ (1 Cor. iv. 7).—‘Whose is this image and superscription? . . . Render therefore to Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s’ (S. Mark xii. 16, 17).

(3.)

To use the creatures simply as means to our end, is fidelity and acceptance.

‘He that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying: Lord, thou deliveredst to me five talents: behold, I have gained other five, over and above. His lord said to him: Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord,’ &c. (S. Matt. xxv. 20, &c.).—‘This man is to me a vessel of election, to carry My Name’ (Acts ix. 15).—‘I have created him for My glory: I have formed him and made him’

(Is. xliii. 7).—‘We ought to obey God rather than men’ (Acts v. 29).—‘I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service’ (Rom. xii. 1).

(4.)

To use them as our own, or as ends instead of means, is rebellion, disorder, and condemnation.

‘Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth. . . I have brought up children, and exalted them : but they have despised Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib : but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood’ (Is. i. 2, 3).—‘The son honoureth his father, and the servant his master. If then I be a Father, where is my honour ? and if I be a Master, where is my fear ? saith the Lord of hosts’ (Mal. i. 6).—‘Woe to him that gainsayeth his Maker, a sherd of the earthen pots : shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it : What art thou making ?’ (Is. xlv. 9).—‘Salt is good : but if the salt shall lose its savour, it is neither profitable for the land nor for the dunghill, but shall be cast out’ (S. Luke xiv. 34, 35).—‘There was a certain rich man, who had a steward ; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him : What is that I hear of thee ? give an account of thy stewardship : for now thou canst not be steward’ (xvi. 1, 2).—‘The unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth’ (S. Matt. xxv. 30).

III.

THE RAVEN AND THE PITCHER.

(Use of Means to our End.)

A RAVEN, parched with thirst, finding a pitcher half full of water, began laboriously to cast into it pebble after pebble, till the water rose high enough to enable him to drink : and so slaked his thirst as the reward of his perseverance.



The persevering use of means to our great end is the test of fidelity and obedience ; these are evidenced in little things as well as in greater, since actions which are in themselves trivial form habits, and are capable of a perfect intention.

Being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col. i. 10).

III.

USE OF MEANS TO OUR END.

(*The Raven and the Pitcher.*)

(1.)

Many successive steps, in the use of means, conduct us to our end.

‘Be zealous for that which is good, in a good thing, always’ (Gal. iv. 18).—‘Do not therefore lose your confidence, which hath a great reward. For patience is necessary for you; that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that is to come will come, and will not delay. But My just one liveth by faith; but if he withdraw himself, he shall not please My soul’ (Heb. x. 35-38).—‘Thou hast commanded Thy commandments to be kept most diligently’ (Ps. cxviii. 4).—‘When you shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do’ (S. Luke xvii. 10).—‘Expect the Lord; do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord’ (Ps. xxvi. 14).—‘God . . will render to every man according to his works: to them, indeed, who according to patience in good work, seek glory, and honour, and incorruption, life everlasting’ (Rom. ii. 5-7).—‘Be diligent, that you may be found before Him unspotted and blameless in peace’ (2 S. Pet. iii. 14).

(2.)

Our end may be gained by acts in themselves trivial and small, since they derive their value from the intention.

‘For man seeth those things that appear; but the Lord beholdeth the heart’ (1 Kings xvi. 7).—‘For who hath despised little days?’ (Zach. iv. 10).—‘He that had received the two talents came and said: Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me: behold, I have gained other two. His lord said to him: Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord’ (S. Matt. xxv. 22, 23).—‘He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater’ (S. Luke xvi. 10).—‘Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, Amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward’ (S. Matt. x. 42).—‘He saw the rich men cast their gifts into the treasure: and He saw also a certain poor widow casting in two brass mites. And He said: Verily, I say to you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all’ (S. Luke xxi. 1-3).—‘She hath done what she could’ (S. Mark xiv. 8).—‘All whatsoever you do, in word or in work, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Whatsoever you do, do it from the heart, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance. Serve ye the Lord Christ’ (Col. iii. 17, 23, 24).—‘Therefore, whether you *eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all things for*

the glory of God' (1 Cor. x. 31).—'Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost' (S. John vi. 12).

(3.)

Successive acts form habits, whether of good or evil: till we learn to live habitually for God, or for self.

'If the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, you also may do well, when you have learned evil' (Jer. xiii. 23).—'He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little' (Ecclus. xix. 1).—'To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? It is as a grain of mustard seed, which when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that are in the earth: and when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air may dwell under the shadow thereof' (S. Mark iv. 30-2).—'When you did eat and drink, did you not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?' (Zach. vii. 6).—'My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord; neither be thou wearied whilst thou art rebuked by Him. . . Persevere under chastisement; . . afterwards it will yield to them that are exercised by it the most peaceable fruit of justice' (Heb. xii. 5, 7, 11).—'Those who by use have their senses exercised to the discerning of good and evil' (v. 14).—'By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace in me hath not been void; but I have laboured more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me' (1 Cor. xv. 10).

IV.

THE FOX AND THE CRANE.

(Indifference in the Use of Creatures.)

THE fox and the crane provided, each in turn, a soup-vessel suited to his own use: the fox, a shallow platter, the crane, a narrow vase. Neither of them minded the vessel's shape, if only it could afford him a supper.



In the use or avoidance of creatures, and in all determinations of choice between them, or between times and degrees of using them, we are simply to be decided by the question, how far they will serve as means to attain our end.}] 

When you did eat and drink, did you not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? (Zach. vii. 6).

IV.

INDIFFERENCE IN THE USE OF CREATURES.

(The Fox and the Crane.)

(1.)

All creatures, objects, and circumstances around us are to be used, or passed by, according as they conduce, or not, to our end.

‘He that eateth, eateth to the Lord : for he giveth thanks to God. And he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth thanks to God. For none of us liveth to himself : and no man dieth to himself. For, whether we live, we live to the Lord : or whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord’s’ (Rom. xiv. 6-8).—‘All things are lawful to me ; but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful to me ; but I will not be brought under the power of any’ (1 Cor. vi. 12).—‘We have not used this power : but we bear all things, lest we should give any hindrance to the gospel of Christ’ (ix. 12).—‘I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound : (everywhere, and in all things I am instructed,) both to be full, and to be hungry ; both to abound, and to suffer need’ (Phil. iv. 12).—‘With all confidence, as always, so now also, shall Christ be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.’

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (i. 20, 21). —'I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. viii. 38, 39).

(2.)

Without this indifference and detachment, we are in danger of spiritual idolatry.

'Covetousness is the service of idols' (Col. iii. 5). —'Let your manners be without covetousness, contented with such things as you have' (Heb. xiii. 5). —'No covetous person, which is a serving of idols, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God' (Eph. v. 5). —'Many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction; whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things' (Phil. iii. 18, 19). —'When you did eat and drink, did you not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?' (Zach. vii. 6). —'It is like the sin of witchcraft, to rebel; and like the crime of idolatry, to refuse to obey' (1 Kings xv. 23). —'Therefore will he offer victims to his drag, and he will sacrifice to his net: because through them his portion is made fat' (Hab. i. 16). —'Who changed the truth of God into a lie: and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen' (Rom. i. 25). —'Little children, keep yourselves from idols' (1 S. John v. 21).

(3.)

Faith rescues the soul from such idolatry and guilty attachment, by teaching the paramount importance of our great end.

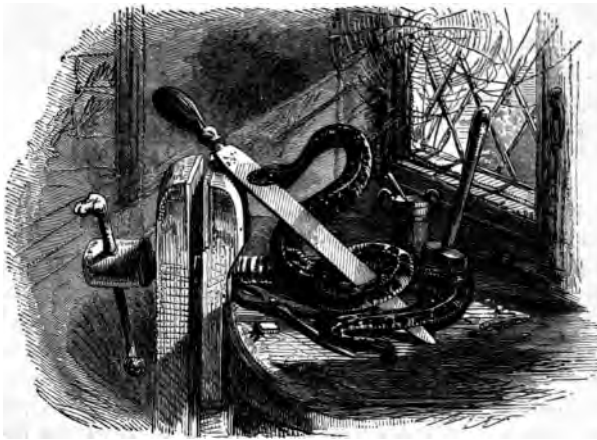
‘Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things that appear not’ (Heb. xi. 1).—‘There shall be faith in thy times; riches of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge: the fear of the Lord is his treasure’ (Is. xxxiii. 6).—‘By faith, he that is called Abraham obeyed, to go out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance: and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith, he dwelt in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in cottages. . . For he looked for a city that hath foundations; whose builder and maker is God’ (Heb. xi. 8-10).—‘Was not Abraham our father justified by works, offering up Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou that faith did coöperate with his works; and by works faith was made perfect?’ (S. James ii. 21, 22).—‘By faith, Moses, when he was grown up, denied himself to be the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer persecution with the people of God than to have the pleasure of sin for a time; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians: for he looked unto the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the fierceness of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible’ (Heb. xi. 24-27).—‘O Lord, my portion: I have said, I would keep Thy law’ (Ps. cxviii. 57).

V.

THE VIPER AND THE FILE.

(Use of Hostile Creatures.)

A VIPER, coming into a blacksmith's shop, found a file there, began spitefully to gnaw it, and tried his utmost to leave the dent of his tooth on the unharmed metal. At length he was forced to own, that with all his keen venomous fangs, his efforts were vain.



Mortification in the use of creatures in general will make us insensible to the malice of such as, having intelligence and will, seek to vex and injure us by word or conduct, especially in the way of slander and detraction.

Blessed are ye, when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake (S. Matt. v. 11).

V.

USE OF HOSTILE CREATURES.

(The Viper and the File.)

(1.)

Even hostile creatures will further us to our great end, if, by their envy and ill-will, we grow in patience, mortification, and humility.

‘To them that love God, all things work together unto good’ (Rom. viii. 28).—‘Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: because your reward is very great in heaven’ (S. Matt. v. 10, 12).—‘Be not afraid at their presence: for I will make thee not to fear their countenance. For, behold, I have made thee this day a fortified city, and a pillar of iron, and a wall of brass, . . . and they shall fight against thee, and shall not prevail: for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee’ (Jer. i. 17-19).—‘Redeem me from the calumnies of men: that I may keep Thy commandments’ (Ps. cxviii. 134).—‘A man’s enemies are they of his own household. But I will look towards the Lord: I will wait for God my Saviour: my

God will hear me. Rejoice not, thou my enemy, over me, because I am fallen : I shall arise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord is my light' (Mich. vii. 6-8).—'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy face, from the disturbance of men : Thou shalt protect them in Thy Tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues' (Ps. xxx. 21).—'As to me, it is a thing of the least account to be judged by you, or by human judgment : but neither do I judge myself. For I am not conscious to myself of anything : yet in this I am not justified ; but He that judgeth me is the Lord' (1 Cor. iv. 3, 4).

(2.)

The envious and malignant will undergo a heavy judgment.

'The wicked . . have spoken false things. Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent ; like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears : . . . God shall break in pieces their teeth in their mouth : the Lord shall break the grinders of the lions' (Ps. lvii. 7).—'A generation that for teeth hath swords, and grindeth with their jaw-teeth' (Prov. xxx. 14).—'They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent ; the venom of asps is under their lips' (Ps. cxxxix. 4. Rom. iii. 13).—'Envy is the rottenness of the bones' (Prov. xiv. 30).—'With what judgment you have judged, you shall be judged : and with what measure you have measured, it shall be measured to you again' (S. Matt. vii. 2).—'Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy' (S. James ii. 13).—'Anger killeth the foolish, and envy slayeth the little one' (Job v. 2).—'All they that devour thee, shall

be devoured: and all thy enemies shall be carried into captivity: and they that waste thee shall be wasted: and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey' (Jer. xxx. 16).—'He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness' (1 S. John ii. 11).

(3.)

While we suffer with patience, and thus increase our merit, we must pray for the conversion of those who afflict us.

'Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you. And to him that striketh thee on the one cheek, offer also the other' (S. Luke vi. 27-29).—'When they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him there. . . . And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (S. Luke xxiii. 33, 34).—'Hearing these things, they were cut to the heart: and they gnashed with their teeth at him [S. Stephen] . . . And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord rushed in violently upon him. . . . And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And kneeling down, he cried out with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge' (Acts vii. 54-59).—'Forgive, and you shall be forgiven' (S. Luke vi. 37).—'Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another. Even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also' (Col. iii. 13).—'Here is the patience and the faith of the Saints' (Apoc. xiii. 10).

VI.

THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

(Use of Contradiction from Creatures.)

A SNARLING, ill-conditioned dog, who had a grudge against a patient and unoffending ox, thwarted him at every turn, and one day seated himself in the stable on a shock of hay, which he could not eat, merely to prevent the ox from approaching it.



Even when their ill-will goes the length of depriving us of what is useless to themselves, or prompts them to some act of malice and envy, we shall preserve this equable mind, using them as means to advance in virtue, and so to our end.

Why do you not rather take the injury ? why do you not rather suffer the fraud ? (1 Cor. vi. 7.)

VI.

USE OF CONTRADICTION FROM CREATURES.

(The Dog in the Manger.)

(1.)

The greater and more unprovoked the malice of creatures, the more do they lead us to our end.

‘Why do you not rather take the injury? Why do you not rather suffer the fraud?’ (1 Cor. vi. 7).—‘I say to you, not to resist evil; but if any man strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall force thee to go one mile, go with him other two. You have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that you may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love those that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens the same? Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect’ (S. Matt. v. 38-48).

(2.)

By such undeserved ill-treatment our habits of virtue are strengthened, and our merits increased.

‘Who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer anything for justice’ sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their terror, and be not troubled; but sanctify the Lord Christ in your heart. . . For it is better, doing well (if such be the will of God) to suffer, than doing ill’ (1 S. Pet. iii. 13-17).—‘For this is thankworthy, if for conscience towards God, a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if, sinning and being buffeted, you suffer it? But if, doing well, you suffer patiently, this is thankworthy before God’ (ii. 19, 20).—‘The Lord is good, and giveth strength in the day of trouble: and knoweth them that hope in Him’ (Nah. i. 7).—‘Princes have persecuted me without a cause: and my heart hath been in awe of Thy words’ (Ps. cxviii. 161).—‘They who suffer according to the will of God, let them commend their souls in good deeds to the faithful Creator’ (iv. 19).—‘The servant of the Lord must not wrangle, but be gentle toward all men, fit to teach, patient’ (2 Tim. ii. 24).—‘Slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God’ (S. James i. 19, 20).

(3.)

The sufferings endured by our Lord at the hands of His enemies will teach us this meekness and patience.

‘Unto this you have been called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not; but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly’ (1 S. Pet. ii. 21-23).—‘Jesus answered him: If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why strikest thou Me?’ (S. John xviii. 23).—‘Think diligently upon Him who endured such opposition from sinners against Himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin; and you have forgotten the consolation which speaketh to you as to children, saying: My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord; neither be thou wearied, whilst thou art rebuked by Him. For whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth; and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Persevere under chastisement’ (Heb. xii. 3-7).—‘If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you. . . Because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you’ (S. John xv. 18, 19).—‘Render to no man evil for evil. . . Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved, but give place to wrath. . . If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him drink. . . Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good’ (Rom. xii. 17-21).

VII.

THE FOX AND THE WOLF.

(Indifference to Human Aid, except as Means to our End.)

A FOX unwarily slipped into a well ; the sides being too steep for him to jump out, he entreated the wolf to help him : but the wolf, whose friendship began and ended with their thievish expeditions, gave him surly answers, and no help.



We are to maintain the same equal mind regarding human aid and friendship ; using them as means to our end, with charity and thankfulness, but conscious how little the creature can help, except as God's instrument.

Behold, there is no help for me in myself, and my familiar friends also are departed from me (Job vi. 13).

VII.

INDIFFERENCE TO HUMAN AID, EXCEPT AS MEANS TO OUR END.

(The Fox and the Wolf.)

(1.)

The creatures around us teach us detachment, by proving unwilling or insufficient to help us in our need.

‘I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none: and for one that would comfort me, and I found none’ (Ps. lxviii. 21).—‘My brethren have passed by me, as the torrent that passeth swiftly in the valleys’ (Job vi. 15).—‘There is a friend for his own occasion, and he will not abide in the day of thy trouble. . . And there is a friend a companion at the table, and he will not abide in the day of distress’ (Ecclus. vi. 8, 10).—‘There is a companion who rejoiceth with his friend in his joys: but in the time of trouble, he will be against him’ (xxxvii. 4).—‘Every friend will say: I also am his friend: but there is a friend that is only a friend in name. Is not this a grief even to death?’ (verse 1).—‘He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?’ (Ecclus. xiv. 5).—‘Let every man take heed of his neighbour, and let him not trust in any brother of his: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every friend will walk deceitfully. And a man shall mock his brother, and they will not speak the truth: for they

have taught their tongue to speak lies' (Jer. ix. 4, 5).—
 'If a brother or sister be naked, and want daily food,
 and one of you say to them: Go in peace, be you warmed
 and filled, yet give them not those things that are ne-
 cessary for the body, what shall it profit?' (S. James ii.
 15, 16).—'Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least
 you my friends: because the Hand of the Lord hath
 touched me' (Job xix. 21).—'Demas hath left me, loving
 this world' (2 Tim. iv. 9).

(2.)

*Under this distress, we may turn to God, and
 find help and comfort from Him.*

'The heart that knoweth the bitterness of his own
 soul, in his joy the stranger shall not intermeddle' (Prov.
 xiv. 10).—'My friends are full of words: my eye poureth
 out tears to God' (Job xvi. 21).—'He that is mocked
 by his friend, as I, shall call upon God, and He will hear
 him' (xii. 4).—'My father and my mother have left me:
 but the Lord hath taken me up' (Ps. xxvi. 10).—'Let
 deceitful lips be made dumb: which speak iniquity against
 the just, with pride and abuse. O how great is the multi-
 tude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden
 for them that fear Thee!' (xxx. 19, 20).—'No man stood
 with me, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their
 charge. But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened
 me . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion'
 (2 Tim. iv. 16-18).—'I will not leave you orphans, I
 will come to you. . . I will ask the Father, and He shall
 give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you
 for ever' (S. John xiv. 18, 16).

(3.)

As disciples of the God of charity, we are taught to love and comfort our brethren.

‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation, who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we also may be able to comfort them who are in any distress, by the exhortation wherewith we also are exhorted by God’ (2 Cor. i. 3, 4).—‘Remember them that are in bonds, as if you were bound with them; and them that are afflicted, as being yourselves also in the body’ (Heb. xiii. 3).—‘Be not wanting in comforting them that weep, and walk with them that mourn. Be not slow to visit the sick: for by these things thou shalt be confirmed in love’ (Ecclus. vii. 38, 39).—‘Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep’ (Rom. xii. 15).—‘Concerning fraternal charity, we have no need to write to you; for yourselves have learned of God to love one another. For indeed you do it toward all the brethren in all Macedonia. But we intreat you, brethren, that you abound more’ (1 Thess. iv. 9, 10).—‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; sick, and you visited Me: I was in prison, and you came to Me. . . Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me’ (S. Matt. xxv. 34-40).

D

VIII.

THE STAG AND THE SHADOW.

(Creatures that lead directly to our End.)

A STAG, going by a pool of clear water, admired the reflection of his antlers in the mirror, but was discontented at the slender yet sinewy limbs that could bear him away from the hounds: ignorant what qualities to value, and what to despise.



In the use of creatures and aids, especially the supernatural, appointed by God as direct means to attain our end, we are to be diligent and zealous; and first, in self-examination, which leads to self-knowledge, and prepares us for prayer and the Sacraments.

Proving what is acceptable to God (Eph. v. 10).

VIII.

CREATURES THAT LEAD DIRECTLY TO OUR END.

(The Stag and the Shadow.)

(1.)

To examine our consciences, and to review our character, position, and responsibilities, is to direct our steps towards our great end.

‘I meditated in the night with my own heart: and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit’ (Ps. lxxvi. 7).—‘He wakeneth in the morning; in the morning He wakeneth my ear, that I may hear Him as a master. The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I do not resist: I have not gone back’ (Is. l. 4, 5).—‘He openeth the ears of men, and teaching instructeth them in what they are to learn: that He may withdraw a man from the things he is doing, and may deliver him from pride’ (Job xxxiii. 16, 17).—‘He that feareth God will turn to his own heart’ (Ecclus. xxi. 7).—‘I have thought on my ways: and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies’ (Ps. cxviii. 59).—‘I have kept Thy commandments and Thy testimonies: because all my ways are in Thy sight’ (Ps. cxviii. 168).

(2.)

This duty is a command from God.

‘Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Set your hearts to consider your ways. Set your hearts upon your ways’ (Agg. i. 5, 7).—‘Lay open thy works to the Lord; and thy thoughts shall be directed’ (Prov. xvi. 3).—‘Let the thought of God be in thy mind, and all thy discourse on the commandments of the Highest’ (Ecclus. ix. 23).—‘Before sickness take a medicine: and before judgment examine thyself; and thou shalt find mercy in the sight of God’ (xviii. 20).—‘Try your own selves, if you be in the faith: prove ye yourselves. Know you not your own selves, that Christ Jesus is in you? unless perhaps you be reprobates’ (2 Cor. xiii. 5).—‘Let every one prove his own work . . for every one shall bear his own burden’ (Gal. vi. 4, 5).—‘Proving what is acceptable to God. . . All things that are reprovèd, are made manifest by the light: for all that is made manifest is light. . . See how you walk circumspectly; not as unwise, but as wise. . . Become not unwise, but understanding what is the Will of God’ (Eph. v. 10, 13, 15-17).

(3.)

The want of self-examination is the cause of spiritual ruin.

‘With desolation is all the land made desolate: because there is none that considereth in the heart’ (Jer. xii. 11).—‘They have been rebellious to the light; they *have not known His ways*; neither have they returned *by His paths*. . . They walk in darkness, as if it were in

light' (Job xxiv. 13, 17).—'Young men have seen the light, and dwelt upon the earth: but the way of knowledge they have not known' (Baruch iii. 20).—'The heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable; who can know it? I am the Lord who search the heart, and prove the reins: who give to every one according to his way, and according to the fruit of his devices' (Jer. xvii. 9, 10).—'There is a way that seemeth to a man right: and the ends thereof lead to death' (Prov. xvi. 25).—'He shall be compared to a man beholding his natural countenance in a glass: for he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was' (S. James i. 23, 24).

(4.)

We must have a sincere desire to gain this knowledge, and to act upon it.

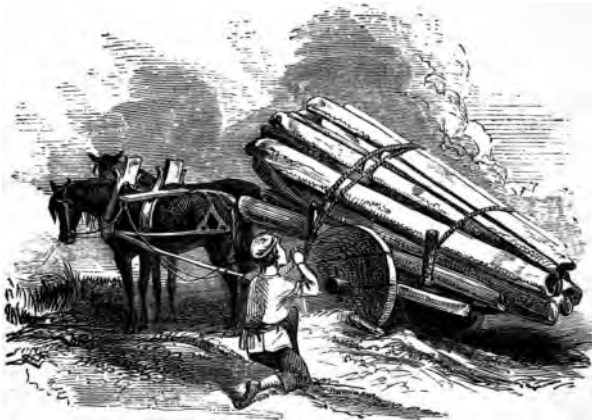
'O that my ways may be directed to keep Thy justifications!' (Ps. cxviii. 5).—'I said, Now have I begun: this is the change of the right hand of the Most High' (lxxvi. 11).—'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' (Acts ix. 6).—'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth' (1 Kings iii. 10).—'Prove me, O Lord, and try me: burn my reins and my heart' (Ps. xxv. 2).—'Teach me goodness, and discipline, and knowledge: for I have believed Thy commandments' (cxviii. 66).—'Direct my steps according to Thy word: and let no iniquity have dominion over me' (133).—'O Lord, make me know my end, . . . that I may know what is wanting to me' (xxxviii. 5).

IX.

THE CARTER PRAYING.

(Prayer, a Means to our End.)

A CARTER, driving his wagon heavily laden with timber, came to a place where the wheels stuck fast in the mire; when his utmost efforts failed to move them, he began to seek help from on high, for what his own unaided powers could not effect.



Having thus gained some knowledge of our spiritual state, we shall recognise how unable we are of ourselves, to think or do anything efficacious to the attainment of our end; and we shall be moved to pray for that supernatural grace which alone can enable us.

He shall cry out to Me: Thou art my Father, my God, and the support of my salvation (Ps. lxxxviii. 27).

IX.

PRAYER, A MEANS TO OUR END.

(*The Carter praying.*)

(1.)

Without grace, and in the same degree without prayer, we cannot take one supernatural or meritorious step towards our end.

‘With me is prayer to the God of my life: I will say to God, Thou art my support’ (Ps. xli. 9, 10).—‘My prayer is to Thee, O Lord; for the time of Thy good pleasure, O God. In the multitude of Thy mercy hear me, in the truth of Thy salvation. Draw me out of the mire, that I may not stick fast: deliver me from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters’ (lxviii. 14-16).—‘When my soul was in distress within me, I remembered the Lord: that my prayer may come to Thee, to Thy holy temple’ (Jonas ii. 8).—‘I entreated Thy face with all my heart: have mercy on me, according to Thy word’ (Ps. cxviii. 58).—‘Wherefore I will pray to the Lord, and address my speech to God: who doeth great things and unsearchable, and wonderful things without number’ (Job v. 8, 9).—‘Not that we

are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God' (2 Cor. iii. 5).—'When I am weak, then I am powerful' (xii. 10).—'Without Me you can do nothing' (S. John xv. 5).

(2.)

To neglect prayer, or to pray amiss, is to lose our end.

'Let nothing hinder thee from praying always: and be not afraid to be justified even to death' (Ecclus. xviii. 22).—'Why art thou fast asleep? Rise up, call upon thy God: if so be that God will think of us, that we may not perish' (Jonas i. 6).—'You will not come to Me, that you may have life' (S. John v. 40).—'Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what doth it profit us if we pray to Him?' (Job xxi. 15).—'The worship of God is an abomination to a sinner' (Ecclus. i. 32).—'My house shall be called the house of prayer: but you have made it a den of thieves' (S. Matt. xxi. 13).—'Before prayer, prepare thy soul: and be not as a man that tempteth God' (Ecclus. xviii. 23).—'Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, that is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord' (S. James i. 6, 7).—'You have not, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not; because you ask amiss' (iv. 2, 3).

(3.)

A right prayer, with faith and perseverance, has every warrant to hope for a favourable answer.

‘Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened’ (S. Matt. vii. 7, 8).—‘All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive’ (xxi. 22).—‘Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto, you have not asked anything in My name. Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full’ (S. John xvi. 23, 24).—‘Whatsoever we shall ask, we shall receive of Him: because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight’ (1 S. John iii. 22).—‘And this is the confidence which we have in Him: that whatsoever we shall ask according to His will, He heareth us. And we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask: we know that we have the petitions which we request of Him’ (v. 14, 15).—‘He spoke also a parable to them, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint’ (S. Luke xviii. 1).—‘Approach to God, and He will approach to you’ (S. James iv. 8).—‘Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid’ (Heb. iv. 16).—‘The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity . . . the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings’ (Rom. viii. 26).

X.

THE LION IN THE SNARE.

(Confession, a Means to our End.)

A LION, ranging carelessly through the forest, found himself on a sudden so tightly noosed in a snare, that with his utmost exertions he could not free himself, till the mouse came to gnaw asunder his bonds, and set him at liberty.



Self-examination teaches us to know the present state of our consciences, while deprecation implies a sense of past sins: and both will lead us to a contrite application to the Sacrament of Penance.

Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven (S. Matt. xviii. 18).

X.

CONFESSION, A MEANS TO OUR END.

(The Lion in the Snare.)

(1.)

Sin is a bondage ; and the heavier, in proportion to its grievousness, and the strength of the habit.

‘A snare shall entangle the wicked man when he sinneth’ (Prov. xxix. 6).—‘The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up : his sin is hidden’ (Os. xiii. 12).—‘His own iniquities catch the wicked : and he is fast bound with the ropes of his own sins’ (Prov. v. 22).—‘We have never been slaves to any man : how sayest Thou, you shall be free ? Jesus answered them : Amen, amen, I say unto you : That whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin’ (S. John viii. 33, 34).—‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us’ (1 S. John i. 8).—‘Because I was silent, my bones grew old ; whilst I cried out all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me : I am turned in my anguish, whilst the thorn is fastened’ (*Ps. xxxi. 3, 4.*)

(2.)

From these bonds, our Divine Redeemer commissions His Church to loose the penitent soul, by the few simple words of absolution.

‘He hath sent Me . . . to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up’ (Is. lxi. 1).—‘The Lord looseth them that are fettered’ (Ps. cxlv. 7).—‘I am the First and the Last, and alive, and was dead: and behold, I am living for ever and ever, and have the keys of death and of hell’ (Apoc. i. 17, 18).—‘The Holy One and the True One, who hath the key of David. He that openeth, and no man shutteth: shutteth, and no man openeth’ (iii. 7).—‘As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them: and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose you shall retain, they are retained’ (S. John xx. 21-23).—‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church . . . and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven’ (S. Matt. xvi. 18, 19. Cf. xviii. 18).—‘He hath delivered my soul from death: my eyes from tears, my feet from falling. I will please the Lord in the land of the living’ (Ps. cxiv. 8, 9).—‘Thou hast broken my bonds: I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call upon the Name of the Lord’ (cxv. 16-18).

(3.)

This power in the Church must be applied for by the penitent.

‘Go, show thyself to the priest’ (S. Matt. viii. 4; S. Mark i. 44; S. Luke v. 14, xvii. 14).—‘Return, O rebellious Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not turn away My face from you. . . I will not be angry for ever. But yet acknowledge thy iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God’ (Jer. iii. 12, 13).—‘There came a leper to Him, beseeching Him; and kneeling down, said to Him: If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, having compassion on him, stretched forth His hand; and touching him, saith to him: I will; be thou made clean. And when He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him; and he was made clean’ (S. Mark i. 40-42).—‘Many of those who believed, came confessing and declaring their deeds’ (Acts xix. 18).—‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity’ (1 S. John i. 8, 9).—‘The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up: his sin is hidden. The sorrows of a woman in labour shall come upon him’ (Os. xiii. 12, 13).—‘He that hideth his sins, shall not prosper: but he that shall confess, and forsake them, shall obtain mercy’ (Prov. xxviii. 13).—‘Be of good heart, son: thy sins are forgiven thee’ (S. Matt. ix. 2).—‘Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more’ (S. John viii. 11).—‘Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee’ (v. 14).

XI.

THE BEAR AND THE BEES.

(Compunction attending on true Confession.)

THE bear, eager to get at the honey-combs, overturned the hive, and let loose on himself a swarm of angry bees, which made him feel more pain from the smart of their stings, than he could have tasted of sweetness in the whole stock of honey.



A sincere confession, that will prove availing to repentance and amendment, must be attended by true sorrow for sin ; which will be lively and abiding, in proportion to the compunction, or sense of pain, conceived from a remembrance of its evil.

I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly : I roared with the groaning of my heart (Ps. xxxvii. 9).

XI.

COMPUNCTION ATTENDING ON TRUE CONFESSION.

(The Bear and the Bees.)

(1.)

Sorrow and pain for the sins confessed is an essential condition of a good confession.

‘By what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented’ (Wisd. xi. 17).—‘There is no health in my flesh, because of Thy wrath; there is no peace for my bones, because of my sins . . . I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly: I roared with the groaning of my heart. . . I am ready for scourges: and my sorrow is continually before me’ (Ps. xxxvii. 4, 9, 18).—‘I will recount to Thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul’ (Is. xxxviii. 15).—‘After Thou didst convert me, I did penance: and after Thou didst show unto me, I struck my thigh: I am confounded and ashamed, because I have borne the reproach of my youth’ (Jer. xxxi. 19).—‘Woe is me, for my destruction. . . But I said: Truly, this is my own evil, and I will bear it. Correct me, O Lord, but yet with judgment: and not in Thy fury, lest Thou bring me to *nothing*’ (x. 19, 24).—‘The sins of my youth and

my ignorances do not remember' (Ps. xxiv. 7).—'I have sinned: what shall I do to Thee, O Keeper of men? why hast Thou set me opposite to Thee, and I am become burdensome to myself? . . Thou writest bitter things against me, and wilt consume me for the sins of my youth' (Job vii. 20; xiii. 26).—'I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me. To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee. . . A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise' (Ps. l. 5, 6, 19).

(2.)

Such true compunction of heart is a grace from God.

'I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers: and they shall look upon Me, whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for an only son: and they shall grieve over Him, as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born' (Zach. xii. 10; S. John xix. 37).—'God hath softened my heart, and the Almighty hath troubled me' (Job xxiii. 16).—'In a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted' (Dan. iii. 39).—'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. (Now this He said, signifying what death He should die)' (S. John xii. 32, 33).—'I am glad . . because you were made sorrowful unto penance. For you were made sorrowful according to God. For the sorrow which is *according to God*, worketh penance unto salvation, which *is lasting*: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

For, behold, this self-same thing, that you were made sorrowful according to God, how great carefulness doth it work in you; yea, defence; yea, indignation; yea, fear; yea, desire; yea, zeal; yea, revenge' (2 Cor. vii. 9-11).—'I will not utterly consume thee: but I will chastise thee in judgment, that thou mayest not seem to thyself innocent' (Jer. xxx. 11).—'Those whom I love, I rebuke and chastise. Be zealous, therefore, and do penance' (Apoc. iii. 19).

(3.)

Holy sorrow for sin, afterwards leads to spiritual joy.

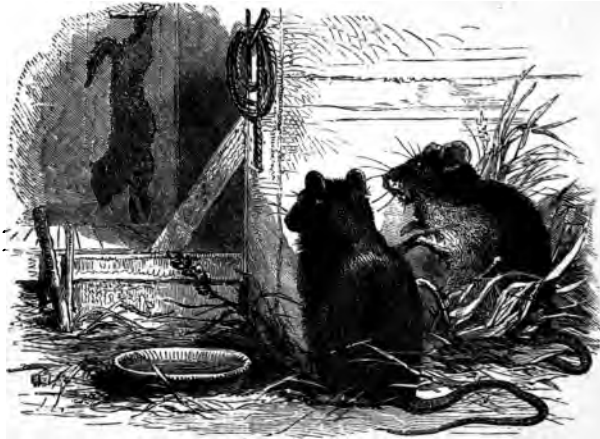
'He hath delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from falling. I will please the Lord in the land of the living' (Ps. cxiv. 8, 9).—'Thou hast broken my bonds: I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise' (cxv. 16, 17).—'I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, for Thou wast angry with me: Thy wrath is turned away, and Thou hast comforted me. Behold, God is my Saviour, I will deal confidently, and will not fear; because the Lord is my strength and my praise, and He is become my salvation' (Is. xii. 1, 2).—'To my hearing Thou shalt give joy and gladness: and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice' (Ps. l. 10).—'He will speak peace unto His people, and unto His saints: and unto them that are converted from the heart' (lxxxiv. 9).—'I will refine them, as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on My name, and I will hear them. I will say: Thou art My people; and they shall say: The Lord is my God' (Zach. xiii. 9).

XII.

THE CAT AND THE RATS.

(Avoidance of the Occasions of Sin.)

A CAT, grown stiff with age, found the rats too nimble in getting out of his way ; so he hung himself up by the heels, feigning to be dead : but the rats, who had seen him pounce on their comrades, distrusted appearances, and kept at a safe distance.



The test of true repentance, and of our having returned with a perfect heart into the path which leads to our end, is a careful avoidance, for the time to come, of all dangerous occasions of sin, especially of such as have caused our own.

He that loveth danger, shall perish in it (Ecclus. iii. 27).

XII.

AVOIDANCE OF THE OCCASIONS OF SIN.

(*The Cat and the Rats.*)

(1.)

It is essential to the goodness of confession, that we firmly resolve to avoid sin for the future, and the occasions of sin.

‘My son, hast thou sinned? do so no more: but for thy former sins also pray that they may be forgiven thee. Flee from sins, as from the face of a serpent: for if thou comest near them, they will take hold of thee. The teeth thereof are the teeth of a lion, killing the souls of men’ (Ecclus. xxi. 1-3).—‘He that washeth himself after touching the dead, if he toucheth him again, what doth his washing avail? So a man that fasteth for his sins, and doeth the same again, what doth his humbling himself profit him? who will hear his prayer?’ (xxxiv. 30, 31).—‘As a dog that returneth to his vomit, so is the fool that repeateth his folly’ (Prov. xxvi. 11).—‘Who will pity an enchanter struck by a serpent, or any that come near wild beasts? So is it with him that keepeth company with a wicked man, and is involved in his sins’ (Ecclus. xii. 13).—‘Turn to the

Lord, and forsake thy sins : make thy prayer before the face of the Lord, and offend less. Return to the Lord, and turn away from thy injustice, and greatly 'hate abomination' (xvii. 21-23).—'He that hath not these things with him is blind, and groping, forgetting his being purged from his old sins' (2 S. Pet. i. 9).—'As it was in your mind to go astray from God ; so, when you return again, you shall seek him ten times as much' (Bar. iv. 28).—'Behold, thou art made whole : sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee' (S. John v. 14).—'Go, and now sin no more' (viii. 11).

(2.)

This resolution must extend to all sins, and all occasions, however near, familiar, or cherished.

'If thy right eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : for it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand cause thee to offend, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body should go into hell' (S. Matt. v. 29, 30).—'And if thy hand, or thy foot, scandalise thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed or lame, than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalise thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into life, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire' (xviii. 8, 9).—'Keep thee far from the man that hath power to kill ; so thou shalt not suspect the fear of

death. And if thou come to him, commit no fault; lest he take away thy life. Know it to be a communication with death: for thou art going in the midst of snares' (Ecclus. ix. 18-20).—'I have restrained my feet from every evil way: that I may keep Thy words' (Ps. cxviii. 101).

(3.)

To suppose that repentance can be sincere, or resolution firm, without this careful avoidance of occasions, would be a self-delusion.

'He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool; but he that walketh wisely, he shall be saved' (Prov. xxviii. 26).—'A hard heart shall fare evil at the last: and he that loveth danger, shall perish in it' (Ecclus. iii. 27).—'Let him that thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall' (1 Cor. x. 12).—'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house, whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and furnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits, more wicked than himself: and entering in, they dwell there. And the last state of that man cometh worse than the first' (S. Luke xi. 24-26).—'If, having fled from the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, being again entangled in them, they are overcome, their latter state is become unto them worse than the former. . . For that of the true proverb hath happened to them: The dog is returned to his own vomit: and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire' (2 S. Pet. ii. 20-2).

XIII.

THE EAGLE AND THE TORTOISE.

(Use of Sacramental Means, and of the Grace they impart.)

THE tortoise, slow of foot, begged the eagle to favour him with a flight: thus, raised to heights he was unable to gain before, he winged his way by the strong pinions of the king of birds, that bore him upward and onward through the air.



As the Sacrament of penance, applied to the spiritually dead, brings them to life again, so all the after Sacramental graces strengthen, elevate, and perfect the new life received, and bring the soul nearer to God, in the supernatural sphere.

Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's (Ps. cii. 5).

XIII.

USE OF SACRAMENTAL MEANS, AND OF THE GRACE THEY IMPART.

(The Eagle and the Tortoise.)

(1.)

*Unaided nature cannot advance on the way of
Christian obedience or Christian merit; but needs,
from first to last, to be moved and supported by
Grace.*

‘My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: quicken
Thou me, according to Thy word’ (Ps. cxviii. 25).—
‘Uphold me, according to Thy word, and I shall live:
and let me not be confounded in my expectation. Help
me, and I shall be saved’ (116, 117).—‘Arise, why
 sleepest Thou, O Lord? arise, and cast us not off to the
end. . . For our soul is humbled down to the dust: our
belly cleaveth to the earth. Arise, O Lord, help us:
and redeem us for Thy name’s sake’ (xliiii. 23-26).—
‘Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee: in his
heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps . . . they shall
go from virtue to virtue’ (lxxxiii. 6, 8).—‘Unto you that
fear My name, the Sun of justice shall arise, and health

in His wings' (Mal. iv. 2).—‘As the eagle enticing her young to fly, and hovering over them, He spread His wings, and hath taken him, and carried him on His shoulders’ (Deut. xxxii. 11).—‘I will rejoice under the covert of Thy wings: my soul hath stuck close to Thee: Thy right hand hath received me’ (Ps. lxii. 8, 9).—‘My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me’ (2 Cor. xii. 9).—‘I can do all things, in Him who strengtheneth me’ (Phil. iv. 13).—‘Strengthened with all might, according to the power of His glory’ (Col. i. 11).

(2.)

This supernatural help and strength is imparted to the soul through the Sacraments: especially by our Lord giving Himself to us in the Divine Eucharist.

‘I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in the midst of you, and I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments, and do them’ (Ezech. xxxvi. 26, 27).—‘You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour’s fountains’ (Is. xii. 4).—‘I am the bread of life. I am the living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world. . . Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man,

and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. . . As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. . . He that eateth this bread, shall live for ever' (S. John vi. 33-59).—'The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord?' (1 Cor. x. 16).

(3.)

The faithful communicant is thus united to Almighty God, here in grace, hereafter in glory.

'The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit' (1 Cor. xv. 45).—'He who adheres to the Lord, is one spirit' (1 Cor. vi. 17).—'As therefore you have received Jesus Christ the Lord, walk ye in Him' (Col. ii. 6).—'He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him' (S. John vi. 57).—'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God' (S. Luke xiv. 15).—'Blessed are they who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb' (Apoc. xix. 9).—'Know you not, that your bodies are the members of Christ? . Or know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you? . Glorify and bear God in your body' (1 Cor. vi. 15-20).—'Thanks be to God, for His unspeakable gift' (2 Cor. ix. 15).

XIV.

THE FOX AND THE LEOPARD.

(Grace to be used against Sin, mortal and venial.)

THE fox and the leopard one day compared their characters and acts : but, while the fox's misdeeds were limited to the hen-roost and farmyard, while the leopard assailed human life, neither of them could allege a single good deed to balance all their evil.



Supernatural grace is to be exercised against the remainders and tendencies of natural corruption in all its forms ; such as would kill the soul by depriving it of grace, or such as weaken and draw it downward, as sickness leads to death.

All iniquity is sin, and there is a sin unto death
(1 S. John v. 17).

XIV.

GRACE TO BE USED AGAINST SIN, MORTAL AND VENIAL.

(The Fox and the Leopard.)

(1.)

Sin is always essentially evil: in its higher degree of mortal sin, it is the death of the soul.

‘All iniquity is sin: and there is a sin unto death’ (1 S. John v. 17).—‘Every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence, and allured. Then, when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: but sin, when it is completed, begetteth death’ (S. James i. 14, 15).—‘Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death’ (Gen. ii. 17).—‘Every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that shall eat the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge’ (Jer. xxxi. 30).—‘Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat; and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die. And the serpent said to the woman: No, you shall not die the death’ (Genesis iii. 3, 4).—‘He shall drive him out of light into darkness, and

shall remove him out of the world' (Job xviii. 18).—
 'This is . . . the law that is for ever: all they that keep
 it shall come to life; but they that have forsaken it, to
 death' (Bar. iv. 1).—'If thy heart be turned away, so
 that thou wilt not hear, and being deceived with error
 thou adore strange gods, and serve them: I foretell thee
 this day that thou shalt perish. . . I call heaven and
 earth to witness this day, that I have set before you
 life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose therefore
 life' (Deut. xxx. 17-19).—'Thou hast the name of being
 alive, and thou art dead' (Apoc. iii. 1).—'Be converted,
 and do penance for all your iniquities, and iniquity shall
 not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your trans-
 gressions by which you have transgressed; and make to
 yourselves a new heart and a new spirit: and why will
 you die, O house of Israel? For I desire not the death
 of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: return ye and
 live' (Ezech. xviii. 30-32).—'This thy brother was dead,
 and is come to life again: he was lost, and is found'
 (S. Luke xv. 32).

(2.)

*Sins which do not immediately kill the soul, as
 being not more than venial, yet, if neglected, lead to
 the spiritual death of mortal sin.*

'He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little
 and little' (Ecclus. xix. 1).—'He that neglecteth his
 own way, shall die' (Prov. xix. 16).—'He that is unjust
 in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is
greater' (S. Luke xvi. 10).—'Catch us the little foxes
that destroy the vines: for our vineyard hath flourished'

(Cant. ii. 15).—‘A just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again : but the wicked shall fall down into evil’ (Prov. xxiv. 16).—‘There is one that slippeth with the tongue, but not from his heart. For who is there that hath not offended with his tongue?’ (Ecclus. xix. 16, 17).—‘In many things we all offend. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man’ (S. James iii. 2).—‘I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the Day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified ; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned’ (S. Matt. xii. 36, 37).—‘Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. And Jesus hearing it, said to them : This sickness is not unto death’ (S. John xi. 3, 4).—‘If the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots : you also may do well when you have learned evil’ (Jer. xiii. 23).—‘Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption’ (Eph. iv. 30).—‘Extinguish not the Spirit’ (1 Thess. v. 19).—‘Do not become like the horse and the mule, who have no understanding’ (Ps. xxxi. 9).—‘Turn to the Lord, and forsake thy sins : make thy prayer before the face of the Lord, and offend less’ (Ecclus. xvii. 21, 22).—‘I have restrained my feet from every evil way : that I may keep Thy words’ (Ps. cxviii. 101).—‘Thou wilt sleep a little, said I : thou wilt slumber a little ; thou wilt fold thy hands a little to rest : and poverty shall come to thee as a runner, and beggary as an armed man’ (Prov. xxiv. 33, 34).

XV.

THE PEACOCK AND BIRDS.

(Against Pride, the beginning of all Sin.)

THE peacock, spreading its gorgeous tail, strutted before the rest of the birds, occupied with a vain conceit of its excellent plumage : though its harsh, discordant voice, and the pride manifested in its self-display, turned all admiration into disgust.



The chief effects of grace, and of the soul corresponding with grace, will be against the chief stronghold of the enemy : pride, which is self-adoration, and leads to rebellion against Him who is adored and served by humble obedience.

His heart is departed from Him that made him : for pride is the beginning of all sin (Ecclus. x. 15).

XV.

AGAINST PRIDE, THE BEGINNING OF ALL SIN.

(The Peacock and Birds.)

(1.)

The root of all sin is pride ; whereby the creature makes self, not God, and self-exaltation, not His supreme glory, the motive of thought and action.

‘The beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God : because his heart is departed from Him that made him’ (Ecclus. x. 14, 15).—‘As wine deceiveth him that drinketh it, so shall the proud man be ; and he shall not be honoured : who hath enlarged his desire like hell, and is himself like death ; and he is never satisfied’ (Hab. ii. 5).—‘But now you glory in your arrogancies. All such glorying is wicked’ (S. James iv. 16).—‘Why doth thy heart elevate thee, and why dost thou stare with thy eyes, as if thou wert thinking great things ? Why doth thy spirit swell against God, to utter such words out of thy mouth ?’ (Job xv. 12, 13).—‘Because thou sayest : I am rich, and made wealthy, and I have need of nothing : and thou knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked’ (Apoc. iii. 17).—‘They have reigned, but not by Me :

they have been princes, and I knew not' (Os. viii. 4).— 'They that trust in their own strength, and glory in the multitude of their riches' (Ps. xlviii. 7).— 'Behold the man that made not God his helper : but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and prevailed in his vanity' (li. 9).— 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but he whom God commendeth' (2 Cor. x. 17, 18).— 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord' (Jer. xvii. 5).

(2.)

Pride is a following of Lucifer, and shares his rebellion, and his doom.

'Thou wast the seal of resemblance, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty : thou wast in the pleasures of the paradise of God ; every precious stone was thy covering . . . thou a cherub stretched out, and protecting ; and I set thee in the holy mountain of God . . . Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day of thy creation, until iniquity was found in thee. . . Thy heart was lifted up with thy beauty : thou hast lost thy wisdom in thy beauty : I have cast thee to the ground . . . thou art brought to nothing ; and thou shalt never be any more' (Ezech. xxviii. 12-19).— 'Thy pride is brought down to hell. . . How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning ! . . . thou saidst in thy heart : I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High' (Is. xiv. 11-14).— 'Your eyes shall be opened : and you shall be as

gods, knowing good and evil' (Gen. iii. 5).—'I have said: you are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High. But you like men shall die; and shall fall like one of the princes' (Ps. lxxxi. 6, 7).—'The Lord shall be terrible upon them, and shall consume all the gods of the earth' (Soph. ii. 11).—'You are of your father the devil; and the desires of your father you will do' (S. John viii. 44).

(3.)

Pride is a special aggravation in the sinner, and is atoned for by his humble repentance.

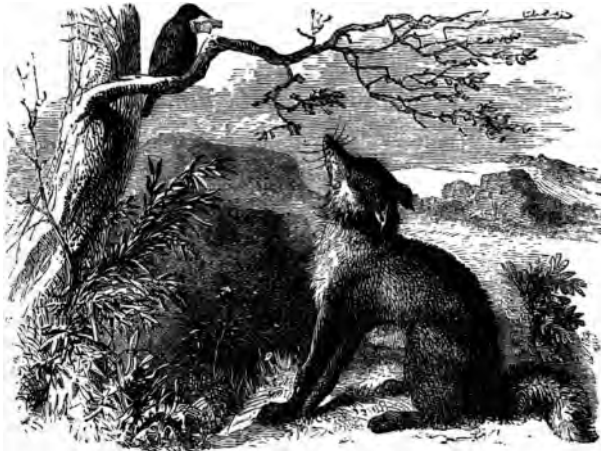
'God hath given him place for penance, and he abuseth it unto pride: but His eyes are upon his ways. They are lifted up for a little while, and shall not stand' (Job xxiv. 23, 24).—'I gave her time to do penance: and she will not repent' (Apoc. ii. 21).—'You are puffed up; and have not rather mourned' (1 Cor. v. 2).—'Thou hast rebuked the proud: they are cursed who decline from Thy commandments' (Ps. cxviii. 21).—'God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Be subject therefore to God' (S. James iv. 6, 7).—'Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that He may exalt you in the time of visitation' (1 S. Pet. v. 6).—'Before I was humbled, I offended; therefore have I kept Thy word' (Ps. cxviii. 67).—'It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me: that I may learn Thy justifications' (71).—'With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee, but now my eye seeth Thee. Therefore I reprehend myself, and do penance in dust and ashes' (Job xlii. 5, 6).

XVI.

THE FOX AND THE CROW.

(Against Vanity, and Love of Praise.)

A WILY fox saw a crow perched on a tree, with a piece of cheese in her beak: in order to get it, he began to flatter the crow, and begged to hear her sing; gratified by his deceitful speech, she opened her beak, dropped the cheese, and the fox ran off with it in triumph.



It greatly ministers to pride to see our good opinion of ourselves reflected in others; still more, to hear it re-echoed from their lips: hence the danger of listening to flattery, which usually, moreover, covers some hidden design for the flatterer's advantage.

An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips: but in his heart he lieth in wait (Ecclus. xii: 15).

XVI.

AGAINST VANITY, AND LOVE OF PRAISE.

(*The Fox and the Crow.*)

(1.)

Grace, saving us from temptations to pride in our own thoughts, will defend us against the flattery of others.

‘An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips: but in his heart he lieth in wait, to throw thee into a pit’ (Ecclus. xii. 15).—‘There is a friend for his own occasion: and he will not abide in the day of thy trouble. And there is a friend, a companion at the table: and he will not abide in the day of distress’ (vi. 8, 10).—‘A man that speaketh to his friend with flattering and dissembling words, spreadeth a net for his feet’ (Prov. xxix. 5).—‘Truths are decayed from among the children of men. They have spoken vain things, every one to his neighbour: with deceitful lips and with a double heart have they spoken’ (Ps. xi. 2, 3).—‘God hath scattered the bones of them that please men: they have been confounded, because God hath despised them’ (lii. 6).—‘There is no truth in their mouth: their heart is vain. Their throat is an open sepulchre: they dealt deceit-

fully with their tongues' (v. 10, 11).—'She entangled him with many words; and drew him away with the flattery of her lips' (Prov. vii. 21).—'In the sight of thy eyes he will sweeten his mouth, and will admire thy words: but at the last he will writhe his mouth, and on thy words he will lay a stumbling block' (Ecclus. xxvii. 26).—'It is a people that provoketh to wrath, and lying children, children that will not hear the law of God; who say to the seers, See not; and to them that behold, Behold not for us those things that are right: speak unto us pleasant things; see errors for us' (Is. xxx. 9, 10).

(2.)

It must be our sincere desire to be told the truth about ourselves with all faithfulness.

'A man that is prudent and well instructed, will not murmur when he is reprovèd: and he that is ignorant shall not be honoured' (Ecclus. x. 28).—'The dissembler with his mouth deceiveth his friend: but the just shall be delivered by knowledge' (Prov. xi. 9).—'As silver is tried in the fining-pot, and gold in the furnace; so a man is tried by the mouth of him that praiseth' (xxvii. 21).—'The wicked have told me fables, but not as Thy law' (Ps. cxviii. 85).—'Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord: but they that deal faithfully, please Him' (Prov. xii. 22).—'A faithful witness delivereth souls: and the double-dealer uttereth lies' (xiv. 25).—'O Lord, deliver my soul from wicked lips and a deceitful tongue. What shall be given thee, or what shall be added to thee, to a deceitful tongue? The sharp sorrow of the mighty, with coals that lay waste' (Ps. cxix.

2, 4).—‘Remove far from me vanity and lying words’ (Prov. xxx. 8).—‘Prove me, O God, and know my heart: examine me, and know my paths. And see if there be in me the way of iniquity: and lead me in the eternal way’ (Ps. cxxxviii. 23, 24).

(3.)

This wholesome self-knowledge is gained especially in Confession and spiritual direction.

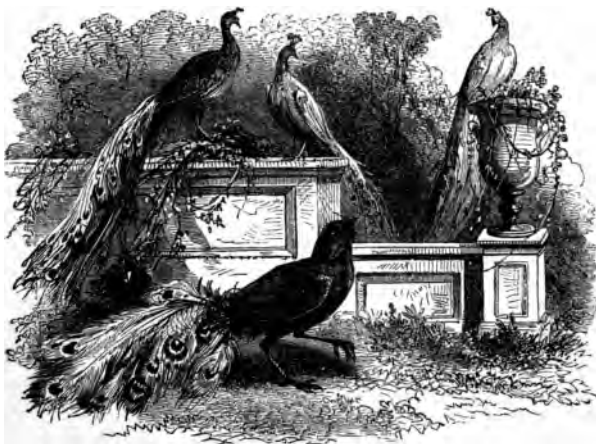
‘Confess your sins one to another: and pray for one another, that you may be saved’ (S. James v. 16).—‘He that rebuketh a man, shall afterward find favour with him, more than he that by a flattering tongue deceiveth him’ (Prov. xxviii. 23).—‘All the ways of a man are open to His eyes: the Lord is the weigher of spirits. Lay open thy works to the Lord: and thy thoughts shall be directed’ (xvi. 2, 3).—‘And Josaphat said: Is there not here some prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire by him? And the King of Israel said to Josaphat: There is one man left by whom we may inquire of the Lord: Micheas the son of Jemla, but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good to me, but evil. And Josaphat said: Speak not so, O King’ (3 Kings xxii. 7, 8).—‘Am I then become your enemy, in telling you the truth? They are zealous in your regard, not well. . . My little children, of whom I am in labour again, until Christ be formed in you’ (Gal. iv. 16-19).

XVII.

THE DAW WITH BORROWED PLUMES.

(Against Hypocrisy, a Consequence of Pride and Vanity.)

A DAW, of sorry plumage, wished to attract the notice he saw bestowed on the peacocks: picking up some of their feathers, he bedizened himself with them, but with so little skill, that the endeavour procured him more contempt than his first obscurity.



A desire for the good opinion of others, will even go the length of making men assume the outward semblance of good qualities they do not possess: though such hypocrisy must always be short-lived, even before the Divine judgment is declared.

The praise of the wicked is short: and the joy of the Hypocrite but for a moment (Job xx. 5).

XVII.

AGAINST HYPOCRISY, A CONSEQUENCE OF PRIDE AND VANITY.

(The Daw with borrowed Plumes.)

(1.)

A further effect of corrupt self-love is the hypocrisy which assumes the outward show of a devotion or charity not really possessed.

‘Be not a hypocrite in the sight of men, and let not thy lips be a stumbling block to thee. Watch over them, lest thou fall, and bring dishonour upon thy soul, and God discover thy secrets, and cast thee down in the midst of the congregation: because thou comest to the Lord wickedly, and thy heart is full of guile and deceit’ (Ecclus. i. 37-40).—‘There is one that humbleth himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit’ (xix. 23).—‘Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth: that thy alms may be in

secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee. And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee' (S. Matt. vi. 1-6).—'Beware of the scribes, who love to walk in long robes, and to be saluted in the market-place, and to sit in the first chairs in the synagogues, and to have the highest places at suppers: who devour the houses of widows, under the pretence of long prayer: these shall receive the greater judgment' (S. Mark xii. 38-40).—'Wo to you' [Pharisees] 'because you are as sepulchres that appear not, and men that walk over them are not aware' (S. Luke xi. 44).

(2.)

Judgment to come will manifest the hidden villainess of all such pretenders.

'Nothing is covered that shall not be revealed: nor hid, that shall not be known' (S. Matt. x. 26).—'The Lord is the God to whom revenge belongeth. . . Lift up Thyself, Thou that judgest the earth: render a reward to the proud. . . Understand, ye senseless among the people: and you fools, be wise at last. He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? or He that formed the eye, doth He not consider? . . . The Lord knoweth the thoughts of *men, that they are vain*' (Ps. xciii. 1-11).—'He knoweth *both the deceiver, and him that is deceived*' (Job xii.

16).—‘Shall He be deceived, as a man, with your deceitful dealings?’ (xiii. 9).—‘Thou sayest, What doth God know? and He judgeth as it were through a mist’ (xxii. 13).—‘The praise of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment’ (xx. 5).—Some men’s sins are manifest, going before to judgment: and some men they follow after’ (1 Tim. v. 24).—‘Therefore judge not before the time: until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts’ (1 Cor. iv. 5).

(3.)

At that day, the shame and agony of the hypocrite will be in proportion to the false honour he has received.

‘Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always’ (Dan. xii. 2).—‘What is the hope of the hypocrite? will God hear his cry, when distress shall come upon him?’ (Job xxvii. 8, 9).—‘The sinners in Sion are afraid; trembling hath seized upon the hypocrites. Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?’ (Is. xxxiii. 14).—‘The hope of the hypocrite shall perish’ (Job viii. 13).—‘He that hideth his sins shall not prosper: but he that shall confess, and forsake them, shall obtain mercy’ (Prov. xxviii. 13).—‘If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But whilst we are judged, we are chastised by the Lord, that we may not be damned with this world’ (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32).

XVIII.

THE FROG TEACHING.

(Against Human Respect, and Compliance with Maxims of the World.)

THE lion, and other animals, assembled to hear the frog discourse to them ; what he said, indeed, was utterly void of truth and reason, yet he croaked so loud as to deceive them into thinking, what made so much noise must needs have something in it.



We are exposed to the influence of those who seem leagued together in a conspiracy, by false maxims, persuasions, and ridicule, as well as by actual example, making up a whole tradition of evil and falsehood, to prevent our attaining our great end.

They are blind, and leaders of the blind (S. Matt. xv. 14).

XVIII.

AGAINST HUMAN RESPECT, AND COMPLIANCE WITH MAXIMS OF THE WORLD.

(*The Frog Teaching.*)

(1.)

Grace, especially faith, must withstand the sophistry of the world's principles and maxims, its seductions, or its scoffs and threats.

‘There are many disobedient, vain talkers, and seducers . . . who must be reproved : who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not’ (Tit. i. 10, 11).—‘Lying children, children that will not hear the law of God : who say to the seers, See not ; and to them that behold, Behold not for us those things that are right : speak unto us pleasant things ; see errors for us. Take away from me the way : turn away the paths from me ; let the Holy One of Israel cease from before us’ (Is. xxx. 9-11).—‘They are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit’ (S. Matt. xv. 14).—‘They that are such, serve not Christ our Lord, but their own belly : and by pleasing speeches, and good words, seduce the hearts of the innocent’ (Rom. xvi. 18).—‘For they who are according to the flesh, *relish the things that are of the flesh* : but they who are

according to the spirit, mind the things which are of the spirit. For the wisdom of the flesh is death ; but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace. Because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God' (viii. 5-7).—'The spirit manifestly saith, that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error, and doctrines of devils' (1 Tim. iv. 1).—'Evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse : erring and driving into error' (2 Tim. iii. 13).—'They have been rebellious to the light : they have not known His ways : neither have they returned by His paths. They walk in darkness, as if it were in light' (Job xxiv. 13-17).—'Young men have seen the light, and dwelt upon the earth : but the way of knowledge they have not known. . . The children of Agar also, that search after the wisdom that is of the earth . . and the tellers of fables . . the way of wisdom they have not known' (Bar. iii. 20-3).—'Forgers of lies, and maintainers of perverse opinions' (Job xiii. 4).—'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good . . for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh' (S. Luke vi. 45).—'Beware lest any man impose upon you by philosophy and vain fallacy, according to the tradition of men, according to the rudiments of the world, and not according to Christ' (Col. ii. 8).—'Be not conformed to this world, but be reformed in the newness of your mind ; that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God' (Rom. xii. 2).—'That we may not now be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, in the wickedness of men, in craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive' (Eph. iv. 14).—'Be not carried away with various and strange doctrines' (Heb. xiii. 9).

(2.)

The disciples of the truth must at times proclaim it by word, as well as exemplify it in their conduct.

‘My people have been silent, because they had no knowledge’ (Os. iv. 6).—‘I have declared Thy justice in a great church : lo, I will not restrain my lips : O Lord, Thou knowest it. I have not hid Thy justice within my heart : I have declared Thy truth and Thy salvation. I have not concealed Thy mercy and Thy truth from a great council’ (Ps. xxxix. 10, 11).—‘I will teach the unjust Thy ways : and the wicked shall be converted to Thee. . . O Lord, Thou wilt open my lips : and my mouth shall declare Thy praise’ (l. 15, 17).—‘I spoke of Thy testimonies before kings ; and I was not ashamed’ (cxviii. 46).—‘Come and hear, all ye that fear God : and I will tell you what great things He hath done for my soul’ (lxv. 16).—‘Go into the house to thy friends : and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had mercy on thee’ (S. Mark v. 19).—‘With the heart we believe unto justice : but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation’ (Rom. x. 10).—‘That speech may be given me, that I may open my mouth with confidence . . . so that I may be bold to speak according as I ought’ (Eph. vi. 19, 20).—‘Ephraim hath compassed Me about with denials, and the house of Israel with deceit : but Juda went down as a witness with God, and is faithful with the saints’ (Os. xi. 12).

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XIX.

THE DOG AND THE WOLF.

(Against Bad Companions.)

THE watch-dog, left to guard his master's house, suffered the wolf to persuade him to go shares in a scheme of violence and lawless plunder; and so, giving himself over to his evil companion, became partaker in his offences and in their due punishment.



Deceit and danger lie hid in the world's general maxims ; but the personal persuasion of one who solicits our company in an individual sin, intensifies them, brings them home to us, and renders them tenfold dangerous and deceitful.

Advise not with fools, for they cannot love but such things as please them (Eccclus. viii. 20).

XIX.

AGAINST BAD COMPANIONS.

(The Dog and the Wolf.)

(1.)

They who are themselves neglecting the end of their creation, never rest till others are induced to follow their evil example.

‘My son, if sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them. If they shall say: Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoils. Cast in thy lot with us, let us all have one purse. My son, walk not thou with them; restrain thy foot from their paths’ (Prov. i. 10-15). —‘Adulterers, know ye not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God’ (S. James iv. 4).—‘They have said, reasoning with themselves, but not right, . . . Come, . . . and let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures, as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine, and ointments: and let not the flower of the time pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with roses, before they be withered, . . . let none of us go without his part in luxury’ (Wisdom ii. 1-9).

(2.)

Such as consort with bad companions are justly involved in the punishment of their guilt.

‘Who will pity an enchanter struck by a serpent? or any that come near wild beasts? So is it with him that keepeth company with a wicked man, and is involved in his sins’ (Ecclus. xii. 13).—‘Go not on the way with a bold man, lest he burden thee with his evils: for he goeth according to his own will, and thou shalt perish together with his folly’ (viii. 18).—‘If thou didst see a thief, thou didst run with him: and with adulterers thou hast been a partaker’ (Ps. xlix. 18).—‘Be not a friend to an angry man, and do not walk with a furious man: lest perhaps thou learn his ways, and take scandal to thy soul’ (Prov. xxii. 24, 25).—‘Seek not to be like evil men, neither desire to be with them: because their mind studieth robberies, and their lips speak deceits’ (xxiv. 1, 2).—‘Be in peace with many, but let one of a thousand be thy counsellor’ (Ecclus. vi. 6).—‘Evil communications corrupt good manners’ (1 Cor. xv. 33).—‘Every beast loveth its like: so also every man him that is nearest himself. All flesh shall consort with the like to itself, and every man shall associate himself to his like. If the wolf shall at any time have fellowship with the lamb, so the sinner with the just. What fellowship hath a holy man with a dog?’ (Ecclus. xiii. 19-22).—‘What participation hath justice with injustice? or what fellowship hath light with *darkness*? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? *Wherefore, go out from among them, and be ye separate,*

saith the Lord : and touch not the unclean thing' (2 Cor. vi. 14-17).

(3.)

We must choose our companions well, so as to profit by their words and example.

'Blessed is the man, who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence' (Ps. i. 1).—'I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee, and that keep Thy commandments' (Ps. cxviii. 63).—'I have not sat with the council of vanity : neither will I go in with the doers of unjust things. I have hated the assembly of the malignant, and with the wicked I will not sit. I will wash my hands among the innocent, and will compass Thy altar, O Lord. . Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked, nor my life with bloody men : in whose hands are iniquities : their right hand is filled with gifts' (Ps. xxv. 4-10).—'If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not esteem him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother' (2 Thess. iii. 14, 15).—'If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you. For he that saith unto him, God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works' (2 S. John, 10, 11).—'Better are the wounds of a friend than the deceitful kisses of an enemy. . . Ointment and perfumes rejoice the heart : and the good counsels of a friend are sweet to the soul' (Prov. xxvii. 6, 9).

XX.

THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP.

(Against listening to False Teachers.)

SOME silly sheep, straying from the safe pastures in which they were secured, and where they had abundance of food and constant watchful care, fell a defenceless prey to the wolves that lay in wait, longing, but unable, to overleap the fence to get at them.



Of all associates that would turn us away from the attainment of our end, none are more dangerous than false teachers, who destroy in their victims not only the fruits and rewards of Christian living, but the life itself.

Ravenous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock (Acts xx. 29).

XX.

AGAINST LISTENING TO FALSE TEACHERS.

(The Wolves and the Sheep.)

(1.)

False doctrines under the guise of religious truth and goodness, are more fatal than maxims and examples manifestly evil.

‘There is a conspiracy of prophets in the midst thereof: like a lion that roareth and catcheth the prey, they have devoured souls’ (Ezech. xxii. 25).—‘Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make My people err: that bite with their teeth and preach peace . . . night shall be to you instead of vision, and darkness to you instead of divination’ (Mich. iii. 5, 6).—‘Take heed lest any man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am He: and they shall deceive many’ (S. Mark xiii. 5, 6).—‘I know that after my departure, ravenous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch’ (Acts xx. 29-31).—‘Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. As we said before, so I say now again: If any one preach to you a gospel besides that

which you have received, let him be anathema' (Gal. i. 8, 9).

(2.)

Especially because they come with great show of authority and persuasiveness.

'Such false apostles are deceitful labourers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no wonder: for Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers be transformed as the ministers of justice, whose end shall be according to their works' (2 Cor. xi. 13-15).—'There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be lying teachers among you, who shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their luxuries, by whom the way of truth shall be blasphemed. And through covetousness with feigned words they shall make merchandise of you' (2 S. Pet. ii. 1-3).—'Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world' (1 S. John iv. 1).—'Many seducers are gone out into the world' (2 S. John 7).—'Thou hast tried them who say they are apostles, and are not: and hast found them liars' (Apoc. ii. 2).—'Then if any man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there: do not believe him. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold, I have told it to you beforehand' (S. Matt. xxiv. 23-25).—'*Speaking proud words of vanity, they allure. . . those who for*

a little while escape, who converse in error' (2 S. Pet ii. 18).

(3.)

The only security is to continue steadfast in the doctrine and communion of the Apostles, ordained by our Lord to teach and guide His flock.

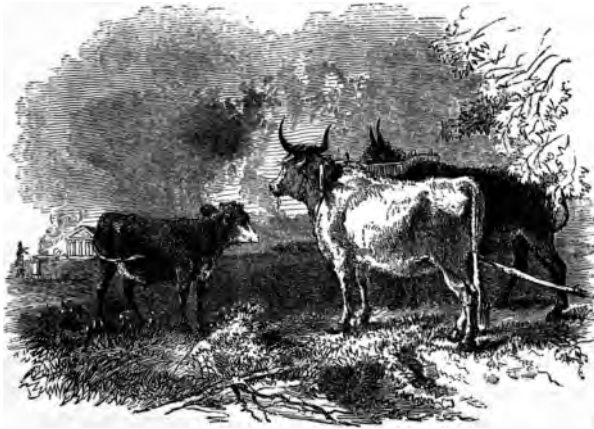
'They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers' (Acts ii. 42).—'The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things' (S. John xiv. 26).—'He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me' (S. Luke x. 16).—'The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts' (Mal. ii. 7).—'He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ . . . that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive' (Eph. iv. 11-14).—'Thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (S. Matt. xvi. 18).—'Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee [Simon Peter], that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren' (S. Luke xxii. 31, 32).

XXI.

THE WANTON CALF.

(Against Self-confidence, and Neglect of Advice.)

A YOUNG calf, petulant and self-confident, despised the advice of the more experienced, even while the altar was ready at which it was to be sacrificed ; and so, neglecting to escape, fell a victim to its presumption and false security.



Outward dangers, coming to us through word or example, appeal to a spirit of self-reliance within, which traitorously opens the door to the enemy, and closes our ears against good counsel from our elders and superiors, who have passed through the like trials before.

Israel hath gone astray, like a wanton heifer (Os. iv. 16).

XXI.

AGAINST SELF-CONFIDENCE, AND NEGLECT OF ADVICE.

(*The Wanton Calf.*)

(1.)

*In prudence, no less than in reverence and piety,
we owe attention to the advice of the more aged and
experienced.*

‘Despise not the discourse of them that are ancient and wise, but acquaint thyself with their proverbs. Let not the discourse of the ancients escape thee, for they have learned of their fathers’ (Ecclus. viii. 9, 11).—‘What doth he know, that hath not been tried? A man that hath much experience shall think of many things: and he that hath learned many things, shall show forth understanding. He that hath no experience knoweth little’ (xxxiv. 9, 10).—‘Hear in silence, and for thy reverence good grace shall come to thee. Young man, scarcely speak in thy own cause. . . In many things, be as if thou wert ignorant, and hear in silence, and withal seeking’ (xxxii. 9-12).—‘Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger’ (S. James i. 19).—‘Ye young men, be subject to the ancients. And do ye all insinuate humility one to an-

other' (1 S. Pet. v. 5).—'A young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it' (Prov. xxii. 6).—'I am younger in days, and you are more ancient: therefore, hanging down my head, I was afraid to show you my opinion' (Job xxxii. 6).

(2.)

Even when their advice involves a wholesome and humbling reproof to us.

'Instruction is grievous to him that forsaketh the way of life: he that hateth reproof shall die' (Prov. xv. 10).—'He that hateth to be reproved, walketh in the trace of a sinner: and he that feareth God will turn to his own heart' (Ecclus. xxi. 7).—'Thou hast chastised me, and I was instructed, as a young bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Convert me, and I shall be converted' (Jer. xxxi. 18).—'Israel hath gone astray, like a wanton heifer: now will the Lord feed them, as a lamb in a spacious place' (Os. iv. 16).—'Submit your neck to the yoke, and let your soul receive discipline' (Ecclus. li. 34).—'It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth' (Lam. iii. 27).—'How good is it, when thou art reproved, to show repentance! for so thou shalt escape wilful sin' (Ecclus. xx. 4).

(3.)

Especially, when our reprovers are invested with the authority of parents, temporal or spiritual.

'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is just. Honour thy father and thy mother; which is

the first commandment with a promise : that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived upon earth' (Eph. vi. 1-3).—'In the last days, shall come on dangerous times. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked' (2 Tim. iii. 1, 2).—'Behold I will send you Elias the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers : lest I come, and strike the earth with anathema' (Mal. iv. 5, 6).—'Come, children, hearken to me : I will teach you the fear of the Lord' (Ps. xxxiii. 12).—'As children of obedience, not conformed to the former desires of your ignorance' (1 S. Pet. i. 14).—'As new-born infants, desire the rational milk without guile, that thereby you may grow unto salvation (ii. 2).—'My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother : that grace may be added to thy head, and a chain of gold to thy neck. My son, if sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them' (Prov. i. 8-10).—'Nathan said to David : Thou art the man. . . Why hast thou despised the word of the Lord, to do evil in My sight ? . . And David said to Nathan : I have sinned against the Lord' (2 Kings xii. 7-13).—'Persevere under discipline. God dealeth with you as with His sons : for what son is there, whom the father doth not correct ? . . Moreover, we have had fathers of our flesh for instructors, and we revered them : shall we not much more obey the Father of spirits, and live ?' (Heb. xii. 7-9).—'Obey your prelates, and be subject to them' (xiii. 17).

XXII.

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANTS.

(Against empty Professions, and mere Talk.)

THE grasshopper, who had sung his idle profitless song the summer through, neglecting to provide any store for the winter, found, on the first stress of severe weather, that the industrious ants had been wiser than he ; their silent toil having filled their granary with corn.



Another source of delusion is the facility of substituting barren knowledge and mere ready phrases for the conscientious painstaking acts of obedience : which alone constitute true devotion, and are efficacious to the attainment of our great end.

Shall a man full of talk be justified ? (Job xi. 2).

XXII.

AGAINST EMPTY PROFESSIONS, AND MERE TALK.

(The Grasshopper and the Ants.)

(1.)

It is a dangerous deceit to indulge in mere talking about our great end, instead of working towards it.

‘Shall not he that speaketh much, hear also? or shall a man full of talk be justified?’ (Job xi. 2).—‘Why call you Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?’ (S. Luke vi. 46).—‘Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven’ (S. Matt. vii. 21).—‘You call Me Master and Lord: and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also. . . If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them’ (S. John xiii. 13-15).—‘They loved Him with their mouth: and with their tongue they lied unto Him.’

But their heart was not right with Him: nor were they counted faithful in His covenant' (Ps. lxxvii. 36, 37).—'The kingdom of God is not in speech, but in power' (1 Cor. iv. 20).—'My people sit before thee, and hear thy words, and do them not: for they turn them into a song of their mouth, and their heart goeth after their covetousness' (Ezech. xxxiii. 31).—'What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him? And if a brother or sister be naked, and want daily food; and one of you say to them: Go in peace, be you warmed and filled; yet give them not those things that are necessary for the body, what shall it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself' (S. James ii. 14-17).—'He that saith, he knoweth Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whosoever keepeth His word, the charity of God is truly perfect in him, and by this we know that we are in Him' (1 S. John ii. 4, 5).—'If these things be with you, and abound, they will make you to be neither empty nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . Wherefore, brethren, labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your vocation and election' (2 S. Pet. i. 8-10).

(2.)

God's judgment will hereafter determine between such as have merely known, talked, and theorised, and such as have laboured and obeyed.

'Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but

the doers of the law shall be justified' (Rom. ii. 13).—
 'A man full of tongue shall not be established in the
 earth' (Ps. cxxxix. 12).—'In much work there shall be
 abundance; but where there are many words, there is
 often-times want' (Prov. xiv. 23).—'They shall come to
 nothing, like water running down' (Ps. lvii. 8).—'Many
 will say to Me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not
 prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy
 name, and done many miracles in Thy name? And
 then will I profess unto them: I never knew you: de-
 part from Me, you that work iniquity. Every one there-
 fore that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall
 be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a
 rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the
 winds blew, and they beat upon that house; and it fell
 not, for it was founded on a rock. And every one that
 heareth these My words, and doth them not, shall be
 like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand.
 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds
 blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell: and
 great was the fall thereof' (S. Matt. vii. 22-7).—'Out
 of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant.
 Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up
 what I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not
 sow: and why then didst thou not give my money into
 the bank, that at my coming I might have exacted it
 with usury?' (S. Luke xix. 22, 23).—'These are foun-
 tains without water, and clouds tossed with whirlwinds,
 to whom the mist of darkness is reserved' (2 S. Pet. ii.
 17).—'The unprofitable servant cast ye out into the ex-
 terior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of
 teeth' (S. Matt. xxv. 30).

XXIII.

THE MICE FEASTING.

(Against Self-indulgence and Worldly Prosperity.)

TWO mice, lean and hungry, managed to squeeze through a small chink into a barn ; there, surrounded by abundance, they feasted and grew so sleek, that on the sudden entrance of the farmer with his dogs, they were unable to get out, and perished by reason of their good cheer.



Corrupt self-love, opposed to faith and obedience, teaches the soul to take up with the things of time, and to seek satisfaction in transitory enjoyment, using the creatures as ends, not means, and so forgetful of her true end.

Let their table become as a snare before them, and a recompense and a stumbling block (Ps. lxxviii. 23).

XXIII.

AGAINST SELF-INDULGENCE AND WORLDLY PROSPERITY.

(*The Mice feasting.*)

(1.)

Temporal blessings and abundance ought to raise men's hearts in gratitude, and draw them to the Giver, and so to their great end.

‘All these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: yet so if thou hear His precepts. . . The Lord will send forth a blessing upon thy store-houses, and upon all the works of thy hands; and will bless thee in the land that thou shalt receive’ (Deut. xxviii. 2, 8). — ‘He found him in a desert land, in a place of horror, and of waste wilderness: He led him about, and taught him: and He kept him as the apple of His eye. . . He set him upon high land, that he might eat the fruits of the fields, that he might suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the hardest stone. Butter of the herd, and milk of the sheep, with the fat of lambs, and of the rams of the breed of Basan; and goats with the marrow of wheat; and might drink the purest blood of the grape’ (Ibid. xxxii. 10, 13, 14). — ‘If you obey My commandments, which I command you this day, that you love the Lord your God, and serve Him with all your heart, and with all your soul: He will give to your land

the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your corn, and your wine, and your oil, and your hay out of the fields to feed your cattle, and that you may eat and be filled' (Deut. xi. 13-15).

(2.)

But the perverseness of the receivers generally turns their prosperity into their ruin.

'The beloved grew fat, and kicked: he grew fat, and thick, and gross; he forsook God who made him, and departed from God his Saviour' (Deut. xxxii. 15).—'The prosperity of fools shall destroy them' (Prov. i. 32).—'When they have eaten, and are full and fat, they will turn away after strange gods, and will serve them; and will despise Me, and make void My covenant' (Deut. xxxi. 20).—'Their iniquity hath come forth, as it were from fatness: they have passed into the affection of the heart' (Ps. lxxii. 7).—'Let their table become as a snare before them, and a recompense and a stumbling block' (lxxviii. 23).—'So they did eat, and were filled exceedingly, and He gave them their desire: they were not defrauded of that which they craved. As yet their meat was in their mouth, and the wrath of God came upon them, and He slew the fat ones amongst them' (lxxvii. 29-31).—'As in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not till the flood came, and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be' (S. Matt. xxiv. 38, 39).—'A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you: It is

easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven' (S. Matt. xix. 23, 24).

(3.)

This danger must therefore be a subject of watchfulness and prayer.

'Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life: and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of man' (S. Luke xxi. 34-36).—'Wo to you that are wealthy in Sion; ye great men, heads of the people . . . you that sleep upon beds of ivory, and are wanton on your couches; that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the herd . . . that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the best ointments: and they are not concerned for the affliction of Joseph' (Am. vi. 1-6).—'As wine deceiveth him that drinketh it, so shall the proud man be; who hath enlarged his desire like hell, and is himself like death, and he is never satisfied' (Hab. ii. 5).—'These men, as irrational beasts, naturally tending to the snare, and to destruction, . . . shall perish in their corruption . . . counting pleasure the delights of a day: stains and blemishes, flowing in delicacies, rioting in their feasts' (2 S. Pet. ii. 12).—'I let them go according to the desires of their heart: they shall walk in their own inventions' (Ps. lxxx. 13).

XXIV.

THE UNGRATEFUL VIPER.

(Against Ingratitude to our Divine Benefactor.)

A COUNTRYMAN, coming from work on a winter's evening, found a viper frozen stiff, and all but lifeless : he brought it home in his bosom, and laid it beside his warm hearth ; but the ungrateful reptile, revived by the warmth, only used its recovered powers to assail its benefactor.



All such perversions of the means for the end, and therefore every conscious and wilful violation of the law of right, imply a base ingratitude against Him who gives light to discern and strength to perform His revealed will.

He that eateth bread with Me, shall lift up his heel against Me (S. John xiii. 18).

XXIV.

AGAINST INGRATITUDE TO OUR DIVINE BENEFACTOR.

(*The ungrateful Viper.*)

(1.)

Sin ungratefully forgets, contradicts, and wounds the love of God, who calls us to self-denial and holiness.

‘I have set before thee, this day, life and good : and on the other hand, death and evil. . . Choose therefore life . . . that you mayest love the Lord thy God, and obey His voice, and adhere to Him ; for He is thy life’ (Deut. xxx. 15, 19, 20).—‘I sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising early, and sending, and saying : Do not commit this abominable thing, which I hate. But they heard not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their evil ways, and not to sacrifice to strange gods’ (Jer. xlv. 4, 5).

(2.)

It is an ingratitude against our Divine Benefactor, who has heaped upon us mercies and gifts.

‘Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children, and exalted them : but they have despised Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib : but Israel

hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood. Wo to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a wicked seed, ungracious children' (Is. i. 2-4).—'I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee from the hand of Saul . . . and gave thee the house of Israel and Juda: and if these things be little, I shall add far greater things unto thee. Why therefore hast thou despised the word of the Lord, to do evil in My sight?' (2 Kings xii. 7-9).—'And now, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and ye men of Juda, judge between Me and My vineyard. What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it? Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?' (Is. v. 3, 4).—'He that rendereth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house' (Prov. xvii. 13).—'The hope of the unthankful shall melt away as the winter's ice, and shall run off as unprofitable water' (Wisd. xvi. 29).—'To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee' (Ps. l. 6).

(3.)

Especially, sin is a base ingratitude against the love and sufferings of our crucified Lord.

'Crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making a mockery of Him' (Heb. vi. 6).—'How much more, do you think, he deserveth worse punishments, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the Blood of the testament unclean, with which he was sanctified, and hath offered an affront to the Spirit of grace?' (x. 29).—'Even the man of My peace, in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, hath greatly sup-

planted Me' (Ps. xl. 10).—'He that eateth bread with Me, shall lift up his heel against Me' (S. John xiii. 18).—'One of you is about to betray Me. . . He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me' (S. Matt. xxvi. 21, 23).—'When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon. And after the morsel, Satan entered into him' (S. John xiii. 26, 27).—'Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table' (S. Luke xxii. 21).

(4.)

The more truly we repent and love, the more we shall endeavour to make reparation for our ingratitude.

'What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that He hath rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation : and I will call upon the Name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord, before all His people' (Ps. cxv. 12-14).—'Zacheus stood, and said to the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor : and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold' (S. Luke xix. 8).—'Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less' (vii. 47).—'One of them,' (the ten lepers) 'when he saw that he was cleansed, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before His feet, giving thanks : and this man was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said : Were there not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return, and give glory to God, but this stranger' (S. Luke xvii. 15-18).

XXV.

THE SOWER AND THE BIRDS.

(Against Forgetfulness, and Loss of Perceptions once gained.

A SOWER went out into the field to sow, and cast into the furrows abundant seed to produce a good harvest : but the birds, watching him from the trees, flew down, the moment his back was turned, and made a meal of the future crop, or good part of it.



Our sense of the end of our creation, of the means at hand whereby to gain it, of the hindrances to be overcome, and the dangers to be avoided, may all be lost again : we may be deprived of them through our carelessness, and the wiles of the devil.

Therefore ought we more diligently to observe the *things* which we have heard, lest at any time we should *let them slip* (Heb. ii. 1).

XXV.

AGAINST FORGETFULNESS, AND LOSS OF PERCEPTIONS ONCE GAINED.

(The Sower and the Birds.)

(1.)

Besides our own weakness, and the maxims or examples of others, we have an enemy always on the watch to rob us of our sense of the end of our creation.

‘A sower went out to sow his seed: and, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. . . Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear: then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest, believing, they should be saved’ (S. Luke viii. 5-12).—‘The birds of the air came, and ate it up. . . As soon as they have heard, immediately Satan cometh, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts’ (S. Mark iv. 4, 15).—‘There cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart: this is he that received the seed by the wayside’ (S. Matt. xiii. 19).—‘The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came, and

over-sowed cockle among the wheat; and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, then appeared also the cockle. . . An enemy hath done this. . . And the enemy that sowed them, is the devil' (S. Matt. xiii. 24-39).

(2.)

He would thus bring us under the curse of those who, having had saving knowledge given to them, at least in part, have lost it again.

'Cursed is the man that shall not hearken to the words of this covenant' (Jer. xi. 3).—'They have not known, nor understood: they walk on in darkness' (Ps. lxxxi. 5).—'Therefore they could not believe; for Isaias said again: He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them' (S. John xii. 39, 40).—'Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see' (Psalm lxviii. 24, Rom. xi. 10).—'The word of hearing did not profit them, not being mixed with a faith of those things which they heard' (Heb. iv. 2).—'Some have not the knowledge of God: I speak it to your shame' (1 Cor. xv. 34).—'Their senses were made dull . . . the veil is upon their heart' (2 Cor. iii. 14, 15).—'A provoking house: who have eyes to see, and see not, and ears to hear, and hear not' (Ezech. xii. 2).—'Having the understanding obscured with darkness: alienated from the life of God through the ignorance which is in them, because of the blindness of their heart' (Eph. iv. 18).

(3.)

Our knowledge of the truth, present or past, leaves us more responsible in proportion to its clearness and abundance.

‘I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them : and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them’ (S. Luke x. 24).—‘Therefore ought we more diligently to observe the things which we have heard ; lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word, spoken by angels, became steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward ; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ?’ (Heb. ii. 1-3).—‘Take heed, therefore, how ye hear. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given ; and whosoever hath not, that also which he thinketh he hath, shall be taken away from him’ (S. Luke viii. 18).—‘He that despiseth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day’ (S. John xii. 48).—‘He therefore that despiseth these things, despiseth not man, but God, who also hath given His Holy Spirit in us’ (1 Thess. iv. 8).—‘He shall open their ear to correct them : and shall speak, that they may return from iniquity. But if they hear not, they . . . shall be consumed in folly’ (Job xxxvi. 10, 12).—‘He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith’ (Apoc. ii. 7, &c.).—‘If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin : but now they have no excuse for their sin’ (S. John xv. 22).—‘If you were blind, you should not have sin : but now you say : We see. Your sin remaineth’ (ix. 41).

XXX.

THE ANT AND THE FLY.

(Life the one Time to work out our Salvation.)

A FRIVOLOUS buzzing fly, bent only on the amusement of the hour, scoffed at the laborious and provident ant, that was making the most of its opportunities for work : till, when the summer was ended, it learnt, too late, that time once neglected never returns.



On our part, we must be as active and zealous in working out our salvation, as our enemy is in compassing our eternal ruin : to this we shall be roused by the remembrance, that one short life only is given to us as the term of our probation.

Walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise : *redeeming the time, because the days are evil* (Eph. v. 15, 16).

XXX.

LIFE THE ONE TIME TO WORK OUT OUR SALVATION.

(The Ant and the Fly.)

(1.)

A short time is given us on earth.

‘How many are the days of the years of thy life? He answered: The days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years, few and evil, and they are not come up to the days of the pilgrimage of my fathers’ (Gen. xlvii. 8, 9).—‘Behold, Thou hast made my days measurable: and my substance is as nothing before Thee. And indeed, all things are vanity, every man living’ (Ps. xxxviii. 6).—‘Our years shall be considered as a spider: the days of our years in them are threescore and ten years’ (lxxxix. 9, 10).—‘This therefore I say, brethren: The time is short: it remaineth, that they who use this world, [be] as if they used it not: for the figure of this world passeth away’ (1 Cor. vii. 29-31).

(2.)

This short time is the only one for trial, repentance, work, and merit.

‘My son, if thou have anything, do good to thyself, and offer to God worthy offerings. Remember that death

is not slow, and that the covenant of hell hath been shown to thee. . . Do good to thy friend before thou die. . . Defraud not thyself of the good day. . . Give and take, and justify thy soul. Before thy death work justice: for in hell there is no finding food' (Ecclus. xiv. 11-17).—'Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly: for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening' (Eccles. ix. 10).

(3.)

Many squander and trifle away this precious time.

'Their days were consumed in vanity, and their years in haste' (Ps. lxxvii. 33).—'I gave her time to do penance, and she will not repent' (Apoc. ii. 21).—'Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knew it not: yea, grey hairs also are spread about upon him: and he is ignorant of it (Os. vii. 9).—'They are a nation without counsel, and without wisdom. O that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end' (Deut. xxxii. 28, 29).—'The days will come, when you shall desire to see one day of the Son of man, and you shall not see it' (S. Luke xvii. 22).—'If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace:—but now they are hidden from thy eyes' (xix. 42).—'In the last days, there shall come scoffers with deceit, walking according to their own lusts, saying: Where is His promise, or His coming? for since the fathers slept, all things continue so from the beginning of the creation. . . But . . one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand

years as one day. The Lord delayeth not His promise, as some imagine' (2 S. Pet. iii. 3-9).—'As yet the vision is far off: and it shall appear at the end, and shall not lie: if it make any delay, wait for it: for it shall surely come, and it shall not be slack. Behold, he that is unbelieving, his soul shall not be right in himself: but the just shall live in his faith' (Hab. ii. 3, 4).

(4.)

We must receive and carry out the lesson of using it well.

'Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light' (S. John xii. 35, 36).—'Knowing the time, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. . . The night is passed, and the day is at hand' (Rom. xiii. 11, 12).—'To-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts' (Ps. xciv. 8, Heb. iii. 7, 8, iv. 7).—'We exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. . . Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation' (2 Cor. vi. 1, 2).—'See, therefore, brethren, how you walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, for the days are evil' (Eph. v. 15, 16).—'Account the long bearing of our Lord, salvation' (2 S. Pet. iii. 15).—'Exhort one another every day, whilst to-day is named; lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin' (Heb. iii. 13).



XXXI.

THE END COMES UNEXPECTEDLY TO THE UNPREPARED.

(The old Man and Death.)

(1.)

The moment of death will come sooner than we look for.

‘My days have been swifter than a post; they have fled away, and have not seen good’ (Job ix. 25).—‘The days of man are short, and the number of his months is with Thee: Thou hast appointed his bounds, which cannot be passed’ (xiv. 5).—‘As a cloud is consumed, and passeth away: so he that shall go down to hell shall not come up. Nor shall he return any more into his house, neither shall his place know him any more’ (vii. 9, 10).—‘Behold now, you who say: To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city; and there we will spend a year, and will traffic, and make gain: whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away’ (S. James iv. 13-15).—‘An end is come, the end is come, it hath awaked against thee, behold, it is come. Destruction is come upon thee that dwellest in the land: the time is come’ (Ezech. vii.

XXXI.

THE OLD MAN AND DEATH.

(The End comes unexpectedly to the Unprepared.)

AN old man, oppressed under his burden, once called upon Death to come and relieve him : but when Death actually drew nigh, he was terrified at the reality, and would fain have recalled some of his time past, accepting its trials, for its opportunities.



The end of that short probation is the decisive moment, when life's burdens, sorrows, and responsibilities, will be over : but also the opportunities of good it has brought, and the means of working out our salvation, which every day affords in abundance.

The night cometh, when no man can work (S. John ix. 4).

XXXI.

THE END COMES UNEXPECTEDLY TO THE UNPREPARED.

(The old Man and Death.)

(1.)

*The moment of death will come sooner than we
look for.*

‘My days have been swifter than a post; they have fled away, and have not seen good’ (Job ix. 25).—‘The days of man are short, and the number of his months is with Thee; Thou hast appointed his bounds, which cannot be passed’ (xiv. 5).—‘As a cloud is consumed, and passeth away: so he that shall go down to hell shall not come up. Nor shall he return any more into his house, neither shall his place know him any more’ (vii. 9, 10).—‘Behold now, you who say: To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city; and there we will spend a year, and will traffic, and make gain: whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away’ (S. James iv. 13-15).—‘An end is come, the end is come, it hath awaked against thee, behold, it is come. Destruction is come upon thee that dwellest in the land: the time is come’ (Ezech. vii.

6, 7).—‘I have done with hope, I shall now live no longer: spare me, for my days are nothing’ (Job vii. 16).—‘God hath numbered thy kingdom, and hath finished it’ (Dan. v. 26).—‘Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst not be steward’ (S. Luke xvi. 2).—‘I must work the works of Him that sent Me, whilst it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work’ (S. John ix. 4).—‘Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if he walk in the night, he stumbleth’ (xi. 9, 10).

(2.)

It is our duty, therefore, and our only safety, to live in preparation for it.

‘Tarry not in the error of the ungodly: give glory before death’ (Ecclus. xvii. 26).—‘Give ye glory to the Lord your God, before it be dark, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains: you shall look for light, and He shall turn it into the shadow of death, and into darkness’ (Jer. xiii. 16).—‘Humble thyself before thou art sick, and in the time of sickness show thy conversation. . . Remember the wrath that shall be at the last day, and the time of repaying, when He shall turn away His face’ (Ecclus. xviii. 21, 24).—‘O Lord, make me know my end, and what is the number of my days: that I may know what is wanting to me. Behold, Thou hast made my days measurable: and my substance is as nothing before Thee’ (Ps. xxxviii. 5, 6).—‘Watch ye, therefore, because you know not at what hour your Lord will come. But this know ye, that if the master of the

house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open. Wherefore be you also ready: because at what hour you know not, the Son of man will come' (S. Matt. xxiv. 42-4).—'Let your loins be girded, and lamps burning in your hands, and you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching' (S. Luke xii. 35-7).—'The end of all approacheth: be prudent, therefore, and watch in prayers' (1 S. Pet. iv. 7).—'In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin' (Ecclus. vii. 40).—'Take ye heed; watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. . . Watch ye, therefore (for you know not when the lord of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning), lest, coming on a sudden, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch' (S. Mark xiii. 33-7).—'Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me' (Ps. xxii. 4).—'Therefore, having always confidence, knowing that while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, and not by sight): we are confident, I say, and have a good will to be absent rather from the body, and to be present with the Lord. And therefore we labour, whether absent or present, to please Him' (2 Cor. v. 6-9).

XXXII.

THE FORESTER AND THE TREE.

(The Stroke of Death is once, and irrevocable.)

A FORESTER, having selected out of all the trees in the forest the one whose turn it was to be cut down, plied it with strokes, now on this side, now on that: but the previous growth and bias of the tree determined the side to which it ultimately fell.



When this last hour is come, our mortal probation will be ended: the acts of self-denial or of sin, which have made up our lives, will determine our doom: as the tree, before its fall, may incline this way or that, but, where it falls, lies immovable.

If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be (Eccles. xi. 3).

XXXII.

THE STROKE OF DEATH IS ONCE, AND IRREVOCABLE.

(The Forester and the Tree.)

(1.)

*Death is undergone once only, and ends at once
our mortal trial.*

‘It is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment’ (Heb. ix. 27).—‘Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: for their works follow them’ (Apoc. xiv. 13).—‘I said: In the midst of my days I shall go to the gates of hell: I sought for the residue of my years. I said: I shall not see the Lord God in the land of the living, I shall behold man no more, nor the inhabitant of rest. My generation is at an end; and it is rolled away from me, as a shepherd’s tent. My life is cut off, as by a weaver: whilst I was yet but beginning, He cut me off: from morning even to night Thou wilt make an end of me. I hoped till morning; as a lion so hath He broken all my bones: from morning even to night Thou wilt make an end of me’ (Is. xxxviii. 10-13).

(2.)

According to the habitual inclination and growth during life, so will be the determination of the soul's state in death.

‘If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be’ (Eccles. xi. 3).—‘Cut down the tree, and chop off the branches thereof: shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruits: let the beasts fly away that are under it, and the birds from its branches’ (Dan. iv. 11).—‘All nations shall be gathered together before Him: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand; but the goats on the left’ (S. Matt. xxv. 32, 33).—‘Between us and you there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither’ (S. Luke xvi. 26).—‘Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always’ (Dan. xii. 2).

(3.)

Destruction will follow an evil or unfruitful growth.

‘Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He will take away’ (S. John xv. 2).—‘A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard: and he came, seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, these three years I come, seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down,

therefore ; why doth it take up the ground ? But he answering, said to him : Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and dung it : and if happily it bear fruit : but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down' (S. Luke xiii. 6-9).—' Let mercy forget him : let him be broken in pieces as an unfruitful tree' (Job xxiv. 20).—' Now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that yieldeth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire. . . Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His floor, and gather His wheat into the barn ; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire' (S. Matt. iii. 10, 12).—' Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ? Even so, every good tree yieldeth good fruit, and the bad tree yieldeth bad fruit. . . Every tree that yieldeth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits you shall know them' (vii. 16-20).—' The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just : and shall cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (xiii. 49, 50).—' Because of unbelief they were broken off. . . Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God hath not spared the natural branches, *fear* lest He also spare not thee. See therefore the goodness, and the severity of God : toward them indeed that are fallen, the severity : but toward thee the goodness of God, if thou continue in goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off' (Rom. xi. 20-22).—' Wherefore we . . . have grace, whereby let us serve, pleasing God with fear and reverence. For our God is a consuming fire' (Heb. xii. 28, 29).

XXXIII.

THE HAWK AND THE PIGEON.

(It brings us to our particular Judgment.)

A RELENTLESS hawk, having long hovered over the dove-cote, at length singled out one particular pigeon from the whole number; and swooping down upon it, to the present neglect of the others, proceeded at leisure to tear out its vitals, and devour it.



The moment of death is also that in which we shall undergo a searching scrutiny into all we have ever thought, said, done, or omitted, during life: a particular judgment, anticipating in our individual case the great Day of universal doom.

*If He examine on a sudden, who shall answer Him?
(Job ix. 12).*

XXXIII.

IT BRINGS US TO OUR PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

(The Hawk and the Pigeon.)

(1.)

Each soul will undergo an individual scrutiny.

‘It shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and will visit upon the men that are settled on their lees; that say in their hearts: The Lord will not do good, nor will He do evil’ (Soph. i. 12). ‘For He will render to a man his work: and according to the ways of every one He will reward them. For in very deed, God will not condemn without cause: neither will the Almighty pervert judgment’ (Job xxxiv. 11, 12). — ‘The Almighty will look into the causes of every one’ (xxxv. 13). — ‘Every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that shall eat the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge’ (Jer. xxxi. 30). — ‘Great in counsel and incomprehensible in thought: whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the children of Adam, to render unto every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his devices’ (xxxii. 19). — ‘We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil’ (2 Cor. v. 10). — ‘So then, every one of us shall render account for himself to God’ (Rom. xiv. 12). — ‘The Lord hath looked

from heaven: He hath beheld all the sons of men . . . He who hath made the hearts of every one of them: who understandeth all their works' (Ps. xxxii. 13-15).

(2.)

This will be very searching and severe.

'Who shall be able to think of the day of His coming? and who shall stand to see Him? for He is like a refining fire, and like the fuller's herb. And He shall sit refining and cleansing the silver' (Mal. iii. 2, 3).—'If He examine on a sudden, who shall answer Him?' (Job ix. 12).—'If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand it?' (Ps. cxxix. 3).—'I feared all my works, knowing that Thou didst not spare the offender' (Job ix. 28).—'Doth not He consider my ways, and number all my steps? . . . What shall I do, when God shall rise to judge? and when He shall examine, what shall I answer Him?' (Job xxxi. 4, 14).—'The word of God is living and effectual, and more penetrating than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also, and the marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature invisible in His sight: but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him, to whom our speech is' (Heb. iv. 12, 13).—'I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned' (S. Matt. xii. 36, 37).—'The time is, that judgment should begin at the house of God. And if first at us, what shall be the

end of those who believe not the gospel of God? And if the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear?' (1 S. Pet. iv. 17, 18).— 'All the churches shall know that I am He who searcheth the reins and the hearts: and I will give to every one of you according to your works' (Apoc. ii. 23).

(3.)

We must live in anticipation of it, and preparation for it.

'Abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be confounded by Him at His coming' (1 S. John ii. 28).— 'Let every one prove his own work; and so he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another. For every one shall bear his own burden' (Gal. vi. 4, 5).— 'I am not conscious to myself of anything: yet in this I am not justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore, judge not before the time: until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise from God' (1 Cor. iv. 4, 5).— 'So speak ye, and so do, as being to be judged by the law of liberty' (S. James ii. 12).— 'Behold, the Judge standeth before the door' (v. 9).— 'Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to his works' (Apoc. xxii. 12).— 'The Lord grant to him to find mercy of the Lord in that day' (2 Tim. i. 18).— 'Understand these things, ye that forget God: lest He snatch you away, and there be none to deliver you' (Ps. xlix. 22).

XXXIV.

THE SICK KITE.

(The Evil of a bad Death.)

A KITE, whose life had been spent in lawless rapine and cruelty, who had even snatched the sacrifices from off the altars, at length fell into his last sickness; and at the approach of death could find no consolation in reviewing the past, nor anticipating the future.



As the life has been, so in most cases will the death be : the sinner who, during his trial for eternity, has hardened himself against the divine fear and love, neglecting the end of his creation, will reap the fruit of his deeds in final impenitence.

The death of the wicked is very evil (Ps. xxxiii. 22).

XXXIV.

THE EVIL OF A BAD DEATH.

(*The sick Kite.*)

(1.)

A life of injustice, pride, and sin, leads to a death of fearfulness, of remorse, if not of despair.

‘Evil men have no hope of things to come : and the lamp of the wicked shall be put out’ (Prov. xxiv. 20).—
‘We have heard a voice of terror : there is fear, and no peace’ (Jer. xxx. 5).—‘Let death come upon them, and let them go down alive into hell : for there is wickedness in their dwellings, in the midst of them’ (Ps. liv. 16).—
‘The hope of the wicked is as dust, which is blown away with the wind : and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storm : and as smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind ; and as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passeth by’ (Wisd. v. 15).—‘The death of the wicked is very evil’ (Ps. xxxiii. 22).—‘I have seen those who work iniquity, and sow sorrow, and reap them, perishing by the blast of God, and consumed by the spirit of His wrath’ (Job iv. 8, 9).—‘Thou hast not given water to the weary, thou hast withdrawn bread from the hungry. In the strength of thy arm thou

didst possess the land, and being the most mighty thou holdedst it. Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless thou hast broken in pieces. Therefore art thou surrounded with snares, and sudden fear troubleth thee. And didst thou think that thou shouldst not see darkness, and that thou shouldst not be covered with the violence of overflowing waters?' (xxii. 7-11).—'He shall be punished for all that he did, and yet shall not be consumed: according to the multitude of his devices, so also shall he suffer' (xx. 18).—'The wicked man is reserved to the day of destruction; and he shall be brought to the day of wrath' (xxi. 30).—'Let mercy forget him: may worms be his sweetness; let him be remembered no more, but be broken in pieces as an unfruitful tree' (xxiv. 20).—'Because I called, and you refused: I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all My counsel, and have neglected My reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction: and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared. When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction, as a tempest, shall be at hand; when tribulation and distress shall come upon you, then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear: they shall rise in the morning, and shall not find Me . . . they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and shall be filled with their own devices' (Prov. i. 24-31).—'I will pour out My wrath upon thee, and I will accomplish My anger in thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways; and I will lay upon thee all thy crimes. My eye shall not spare, neither will I show mercy: but I will lay thy ways upon thee, and thy abominations shall *be in the midst* of thee: and you shall know that I am

the Lord that strike. Behold, the day, behold, it is come' (Ezech. vii. 8-10).

(2.)

The good thief, who, after a thorough change of heart, practised heroic virtues on the cross, is the great example of a true death-bed repentance, that no one may despair.

'The self-same thing the thieves also, that were crucified with Him, reproached Him with' (S. Matt. xxvii. 44).—'They that were crucified with Him, reviled Him' (S. Mark xv. 32).—'One of these robbers who were hanging, blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise' (S. Luke xxiii. 39-43).—'About the eleventh hour He went out, and found others standing. . . He saith to them: Go you also into My vineyard. . . I will also give to this last even as to thee. . . So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen' (S. Matt. xx. 6-16).—'One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day' (2 S. Pet. iii. 8).

XXXV.

THE CAT AND THE POULTRY.

(The Suddenness of Death and Judgment.)

THE cock, who had crowed defiance to unreal dangers, and had come off conqueror in imaginary conflicts with those of other barn-doors, did not observe the cat who lay in wait for him, and by a sudden spring, seized and carried him off in a trice.



Life, at the longest, is a brief trial: they who use it best, find the end come, before they thought it so near: but they who neglect this time of repentance and salvation are caught in a sudden destruction, which allows them no time.

His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee (Eccclus. v. 9).

XXXV.

THE SUDDENNESS OF DEATH AND JUDGMENT.

(The Cat and the Poultry.)

(1.)

*The end of mortal probation comes suddenly,
and as a judgment to the unprepared.*

‘I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel chastisement : by reason of the multitude of thy iniquities, thy sins are hardened. Why criest thou for thy affliction ? thy sorrow is incurable : for the multitude of thy iniquity, and for thy hardened sins, I have done these things to thee’ (Jer. xxx. 14, 15).—‘But indeed for deceits Thou hast put it to them : when they were lifted up, Thou hast cast them down. How are they brought to desolation ! they have suddenly ceased to be : they have perished by reason of their iniquity. As the dream of them that awake, O Lord : so in Thy city Thou shalt bring their image to nothing’ (Ps. lxxii. 18-20).—‘Now I will speak My judgments with them. Behold, He shall come up as a cloud, and His chariots as a tempest : His horses are swifter than eagles : woe unto us, for we are laid waste’ (Jer. iv. 12, 13).—‘Unless thou hold thyself diligently in the fear of the Lord, thy

house shall quickly be overthrown' (Ecclus. xxvii. 4).— 'The slipping of a false tongue is as one that falleth on the pavement: so the fall of the wicked shall come speedily' (xx. 20).— 'Revenge is Mine, and I will repay them in due time, that their foot may slide: the day of destruction is at hand, and the time makes haste to come' (Deut. xxxii. 35).— 'There shall be lying teachers among you, who shall . . . deny the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction' (2 S. Pet. ii. 1).— 'Watch ye, therefore; because you know not at what hour your Lord will come. But this know ye, that if the master of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open. Wherefore be you also ready; because at what hour you know not, the Son of man will come' (S. Matt. xxiv. 42-44).— 'As the lightning, that lighteneth from under heaven, shineth unto the parts that are under heaven, so shall the Son of man be in His day' (S. Luke xvii. 24).

(2.)

That sudden end must be anticipated by an immediate repentance, conversion, and amendment.

'Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder . . . And say not, the mercy of the Lord is great, He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins. For mercy and wrath quickly come from Him: and His wrath looketh upon sinners. Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day. For His wrath shall come on a sudden: and in the time of

vengeance He will destroy thee' (Ecclus. v. 4, 6-9).— 'Yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as the pains upon her that is with child: and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: for you are all the children of light, and children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do: but let us watch, and be sober. For they who sleep, sleep in the night: and they who are drunk, are drunk in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober; having on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation: for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to the purchasing of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess. v. 2-9).— 'I will stand upon my watch, and fix my foot upon the tower: and I will watch to see what will be said to me, and what I may answer to him that reproveth me' (Hab. ii. 1).— 'I am upon the watch-tower of the Lord standing continually by day: and I am upon my ward, standing whole nights' (Is. xxi. 8).— 'Blessed is the man that heareth Me, and that watcheth daily at My gates, and waiteth at the posts of My doors' (Prov. viii. 34).— 'Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments' (Apoc. xvi. 15).— 'Remember wrath, for it will not tarry long. Humble thy spirit very much: for the vengeance on the flesh of the ungodly is fire and worms' (Ecclus. vii. 18, 19).

XXXVI.

THE SHEEP DEVoured.

(The utter Destruction of a Death in Sin.)

A SELF-WILLED, foolhardy sheep, neglectful of the shepherd's guidance and defending care, resolved to tread the path of its own choice; falling thereby into the jaws and talons of the foes, that rushed and swooped upon it from various quarters; the wolf, the fox, and the kite.



They to whom this sudden end of life brings a bad and unprovided death have thenceforward no means of recovery for ever; but are left a prey to their own remorse and un-availing anguish, and to the malice and torments of their spiritual enemies.

I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: seek Thy servant (Ps. cxviii. 176).

XXXVI.

THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF A DEATH IN SIN.

(*The Sheep devoured.*)

(1.)

To wander from the pursuit of our end is to expose ourselves to manifold enemies, and utter destruction.

‘My sheep . . . became the prey of all the beasts of the field, and were scattered. My sheep have wandered in every mountain, and in every high hill : and My flocks were scattered upon the face of the earth : and there was none that sought them; there was none, I say, that sought them’ (Ezech. xxxiv. 5, 6).—‘The sword to kill, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and to destroy’ (Jer. xv. 3).—‘Consider my enemies, for they are multiplied : and they hate me with an unjust hatred’ (Ps. xxiv. 19).—‘How happeneth it, O Israel, that thou art in thy enemy’s land ? thou art counted with them that go down into hell. Thou hast forsaken the fountains of wisdom : for if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou hadst surely dwelt in peace for ever’ (Bar. iii. 10-13).—‘I will meet them as

a bear that is robbed of her whelps : and I will rend the inner parts of their liver : and I will devour them there as a lion : the beast of the field shall tear them. Destruction is thy own, O Israel : thy help is only in Me' (Os. xiii. 8, 9).—'Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are enemies of the Cross of Christ ; whose end is destruction' (Phil. iii. 18, 19).—'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God. But exhort one another every day, while to-day is named ; lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. . . And with whom was He offended forty years ? Was it not with those who sinned, whose carcasses were laid in the desert ? And to whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest, but to them who were incredulous ?' (Heb. iii. 12-18).—'Having faith, and a good conscience ; which some rejecting, have made shipwreck concerning the faith . . whom I have delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme' (1 Tim. i. 19, 20).—'Some are already turned aside after Satan' (v. 15).—'Is Israel a bondman, or a home-born slave ? why then is he become a prey ? . . Thy own wickedness shall reprove thee ; and thy apostasy shall rebuke thee. Know thou, and see, that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God' (Jer. ii. 14-19).

(2.)

The only escape is to return by the path through which we have wandered.

'I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost. Seek

Thy servant: because I have not forgotten Thy commandments' (Ps. cxviii. 176).—'You were as sheep going astray: but you are now converted to the Pastor and Bishop of your souls' (1 S. Pet. ii. 25).—'Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I Myself will seek My sheep, and will visit them. As the shepherd visiteth his flock in the day when he shall be in the midst of his sheep that were scattered: so will I visit My sheep, and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. . . I will seek that which was lost: and that which was driven away I will bring again: and I will bind up that which was broken: and I will strengthen that which was weak: and that which was fat and strong I will preserve: and I will feed them in judgment' (Ezech. xxxiv. 11-16).—'I will gather together the remnant of My flock . . . and I will make them return to their own fields, and they shall increase and be multiplied' (Jer. xxiii. 3).—'They shall come with weeping, and I will bring them back in mercy. . . He that scattered Israel will gather him: and He will keep him as a shepherd doth his flock' (Jer. xxxi. 9, 10).—'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost' (S. Luke xix. 10).—'I am the Good Shepherd; and I know Mine, and Mine know Me. . . And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring; and they shall hear My voice: and there shall be made one fold, and one Shepherd' (S. John x. 14, 16).

XXXVII.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

(Our Divine Lord the Model of a perfect Life.)

THE lamb, drinking quietly from a stream, was accused by the wolf of troubling the waters: though he showed the impossibility of the charge, yet the wolf, to whom any pretext served the turn, rushed upon and devoured him, as if it had been proved.



Our Divine Lord, the pattern of all innocence and meekness, has left us His perfect example to be our guide in every duty, relation, and event in life: especially in suffering persecution for His sake with quietness and confidence.

Christ therefore having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought (1 S. Pet. iv. 1).

XXXVII.

OUR DIVINE LORD THE MODEL OF A PERFECT LIFE.

(The Wolf and the Lamb.)

(1.)

Our Divine Lord, the pattern of all innocence and meekness, has left us His perfect example to be our guide in every event of life; especially in suffering persecution with quietness and confidence.

‘I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim : and I knew not that they had devised counsels against me, saying : Let us put wood on his bread, and cut him off from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no more’ (Jer. xi. 19).—‘He was offered, because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth : He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and He shall not open His mouth’ (Is. liii. 7).—‘He shall not cry, nor have respect to person ; neither shall His voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench : He shall bring forth judgment unto truth’ (xlii. 2, 3).—‘The high-priest,

rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying: Answerest Thou nothing to the things that are laid to Thy charge by these men? But He held His peace, and answered nothing' (S. Mark xiv. 60, 61).—Herod 'questioned Him with many words. But He answered him nothing' (S. Luke xxiii. 9).—'And Jesus stood before the governor. And when He was accused by the chief-priests and ancients, He answered nothing. Then Pilate saith to Him: Dost Thou not hear how great testimonies they allege against Thee? And He answered him not to any word: so that the governor wondered exceedingly' (S. Matt. xxvii. 11-14).—'They have opened their mouths upon Me, and reproaching Me they have struck Me on the cheek: they are filled with My pains' (Job xvi. 11).—'Christ, therefore, having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought. . . Most dearest, think not strange the burning heat which is to try you, as if some new thing happened to you: but rejoice, being partakers of the sufferings of Christ. . . . If you be reproached for the Name of Christ, you shall be happy. . . . If as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name' (1 S. Pet. iv. 1, 12, 13, 16).—'For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter' (Ps. xliii. 22, Rom. viii. 36).

(2.)

He has suffered, and teaches us to do so, under charges however false and malicious.

'Me the world hateth, because I give testimony of it, *that the works thereof are evil*' (S. John vii. 7).—'*If the wolf shall at any time have fellowship with the lamb, so*

the sinner with the just' (Ecclus. xiii. 21).—'Some said: He is a good Man. And others said: No; but He seduceth the people' (S. John vii. 12).—'The Pharisees said: He casteth out devils, by the prince of the devils' (S. Matt. ix. 34).—'This Man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils' (xii. 24).—'The Pharisees going away, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Him in His speech' (xxii. 15).—'The Pharisees going out, immediately made a consultation with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him' (S. Mark iii. 6).—'Lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him' (S. Luke xi. 54).—'The chief-priests, and the scribes, and the rulers of the people, sought to destroy Him' (xix. 47).—'Being upon the watch, they sent spies, who should feign themselves just, that they might take hold of Him in His words, that they might deliver Him up to the authority and power of the governor' (xx. 20).—'We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar' (xxiii. 2).—'The chief-priests, and all the council, sought for evidence against Jesus, that they might put Him to death: and they found none. For many bore false witness against Him: and their evidence did not agree' (S. Mark xiv. 55, 56).—'If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee' (S. John xviii. 30).—'The Scripture was fulfilled which saith: And with the wicked He was reputed' (S. Mark xv. 28).—'Do we not say well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered: I have not a devil: but I honour My Father, and you have dishonoured Me' (S. John viii. 48, 49).

XXXVIII.

THE HORSE AND THE ASS.

(We are taught Patience under Scorn and Contempt.)

A WAR-HORSE, gaily caparisoned, pranced along in his pride, and despised the poor patient ass toiling under his load: but soon after, stretched in agony on the battle-field, would fain have changed places with the useful enduring beast of burden.



One of the first lessons we are to derive in this illuminative way is the cultivation of a meek and patient endurance, not only in the rarer times of active persecution, but under the frequent scorn which such a spirit elicits from the prosperous and the proud.

The Lord is high, and looketh on the low: and the high He knoweth afar off (Ps. cxxxvii. 6).

XXXVIII.

WE ARE TAUGHT PATIENCE UNDER SCORN AND CONTEMPT.

(*The Horse and the Ass.*)

(1.)

To be poor in spirit is to be like our Lord, and to win His blessing.

‘Jesus seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He had sat down, His disciples came to Him. And opening His mouth, He taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’ (S. Matt. v. 1-3).—‘Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery Himself to be equal to God; but debased Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men, and in shape found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross’ (Phil. ii. 5-8).—‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them: and they that have power over them are called beneficent. But you not so: but he who is the greatest among you, let him be as the least: and he that *is the leader*, as he that serveth. For which is greater,

he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at table? But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth' (S. Luke xxii. 25-27).

(2.)

Pride and self-confidence are the forerunners of spiritual ruin.

'In the way of scorers is a deep pit' (Prov. xiii. 15).—'Pride goeth before destruction: and the spirit is lifted up before a fall' (xvi. 18).—'He that is without fear, cannot be justified: for the wrath of his high spirits is his ruin' (Ecclus. i. 28).—'The king is not saved by a great army: nor shall the giant be saved by his own great strength. Vain is the horse for safety: neither shall he be saved by the abundance of his strength' (Ps. xxxii. 16, 17).—'He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat' (S. Luke i. 51, 52).—'Every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled' (xviii. 14).

(3.)

Here, or hereafter, the proud and the humble will change places.

'I will take away out of the midst of thee thy proud boasters: and I will leave in the midst of thee a poor and a needy people: and they shall hope in the name of the Lord' (Soph. iii. 11, 12).—'All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to Thee? who deliverest the poor from the hand of them that are stronger than he' (Ps. xxxiv. 10).—'The stone which the builders rejected, the same

is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing: and it is wonderful in our eyes' (cxvii. 22, 23).— 'Do not multiply to speak lofty things, boasting: let old matters depart from your mouth: for the Lord is a God of all knowledge, and to Him are thoughts prepared. The bow of the mighty is overcome, and the weak are girt with strength. They that were full before, have hired themselves out for bread; and the hungry are filled. . . . The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: He humbleth, and He exalteth. He raiseth up the needy from the dust, and lifteth up the poor from the dunghill: that he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory' (1 Kings ii. 3-8).— 'It came to pass, that the beggar died; and he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died; and he was buried in hell. And, lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom' (S. Luke xvi. 22, 23).— 'Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them, and taken away their labours. These, seeing it, shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation, saying within themselves, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit: These are they, whom we had sometime in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints. . . . Such things as these the sinners said in hell' (Wisd. v. 1-5, 14).— 'I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners' (Ps. lxxxiii. 11).

XXXIX.

THE OAK AND THE REED.

(The Spirit of Submission, especially under Authority.)

A STRONG and sturdy oak, too proud to bend before the blast, encountered a hurricane, that broke it short off, and hurled it down the stream; while the humble reed, that let every air go over it, rose again elastic, and flourished still.



In direct opposition to the pride and stubbornness of man's heart, and to all the maxims founded on that chief sin, our Lord came to teach us, by precept and example, the new doctrine of humble submission, first to God, then to our neighbour for God's sake.

Is not their exaltation cut down? . . . Submit thyself then to Him, and be at peace (Job xxii. 20, 21).

XXXIX.

THE SPIRIT OF SUBMISSION, ESPECIALLY UNDER AUTHORITY.

(*The Oak and the Reed.*)

(1.)

The stubbornness of pride is doomed to be broken.

‘Let mercy forget him : let him be broken in pieces as an unfruitful tree. . . . When he standeth up, he shall not trust to his life. . . . They are lifted up for a little while, and shall not stand, and shall be brought down as all things, and shall be taken away : and as the tops of the ears of corn they shall be broken’ (Job xxiv. 20-24).—‘They shall sow wind, and reap a whirlwind : there is no standing stalk in it’ (Os. viii. 7).—‘I have seen the wicked highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus. And I passed by, and lo, he was not : and I sought him, and his place was not found’ (Ps. xxxvi. 35, 36).—‘Is not their exaltation cut down, and hath not fire devoured the remnants of them ? Submit thyself then to Him, and be at peace : and thereby thou shalt have the best fruits’ (Job xxii. 20, 21).—‘Let the brother of low condition glory in his exaltation : but the rich, in his being low ; because as the flower of the grass

he shall pass away' (S. James i. 9, 10).—'What will you do in the day of visitation, and of the calamity which cometh from afar? . . . That you be not bowed down under the bond, and fall with the slain?' (Is. x. 3, 4).—'No man speaketh what is good: there is none that doeth penance for his sin, saying: What have I done?' (Jer. viii. 6).—'As if a rod should lift itself up against him that lifteth it up, and a staff exalt itself, which is but wood. Therefore the Sovereign Lord, the Lord of Hosts, shall send leanness among his fat ones . . . and the glory of his forest, and of his beautiful hill shall be consumed from the soul even to the flesh' (Is. x. 15-18).—'I see that this people is stiff-necked: Let Me alone, that My wrath may be kindled against them, and that I may destroy them' (Exod. xxxii. 9, 10).—'Who hath resisted Him, and hath had peace? Who hath removed mountains, and they whom He overthrew in His wrath, knew it not' (Job ix. 4, 5).—'Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder' (S. Matt. xxi. 44).—'The voice of the Lord is in power: the voice of the Lord in magnificence. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars: yea, the Lord shall break the cedars of Libanus' (Ps. xxviii. 4, 5).—'The Lord of hosts that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee' (Jer. xi. 17).—'The Lord at thy right hand hath broken kings in the day of His wrath. He shall crush the heads in the land of many' (Ps. cix. 5, 6).

(2.)

Humble submission to God, and to those set over us by Him, is safe, holy, and blessed.

‘He shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season : and his leaf shall not fall off : and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper’ (Ps. i. 3).—‘I say to you, not to resist evil : but if any man strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall force thee to go one mile, go with him other two’ (S. Matt. v. 39-41).—‘He shall spare the poor and needy : and he shall save the souls of the poor’ (Ps. lxxi. 13).—‘What am I, then, that I should answer Him, and have words with Him? I, who although I should have any just thing, would not answer, but would make supplication to my Judge’ (Job ix. 14, 15).—‘He that hath been humbled, shall be in glory : and he that shall bow down his eyes shall be saved’ (xxii. 29).—‘Do ye all insinuate humility one to another : for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God ; that He may exalt you in the time of visitation’ (1 S. Pet. v. 5, 6).—‘Be ye subject, therefore, to every human creature, for God’s sake ; whether it be to the king, as excelling ; or to governors, as sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of the good’ (ii. 13, 14).—‘The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench’ (Is. xlii. 3).

XL.

THE ASS AND THE THISTLE.

(Acceptance of Hardship, and Simplicity of Living.)

AN ass, well accustomed to rough usage and hard fare, was content to crop the prickly thistle for his meal; without bestowing a thought on the dainty provisions he carried, for the regaling of some who deemed themselves vastly his superiors.



The great lesson of mortification will be our sovereign remedy against the other sources of corruption, which are, sensuality, anger, and impatience: teaching us, after the pattern that has been left us, to abstain, to endure, and to be content.

Patience is necessary for you, that doing the will of God, you may receive the promise (Heb. x. 36).

XL.

ACCEPTANCE OF HARDSHIP, AND SIMPLICITY OF LIVING.

(The Ass and the Thistle.)

(1.)

Mortification, laboriousness, and hardness of living, are directly opposed to the spirit of a proud luxurious world.

‘John was clothed with camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins : and he ate locusts and wild honey’ (S. Mark i. 6).—‘He commanded them, that they should take nothing for their journey but a staff only : no scrip, no bread, nor money in their purse ; but to be shod with sandals, and that they should not put on two coats’ (S. Mark vi. 8, 9).—‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken : for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return’ (Gen. iii. 19).—‘Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him ? But you have dishonoured the poor. Do not the rich oppress you by might ; and do not they draw you before

the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme the good Name that is invoked upon you?' (S. James ii. 5-7).— 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For he that will save his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it' (S. Matt. xvi. 24, 25).— 'He will guide the mild in judgment: He will teach the meek His ways' (Ps. xxiv. 9).— 'I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners' (Ps. lxxxiii. 11).— 'I am poor, and in labours from my youth' (Ps. lxxxvii. 16).— 'If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written: I will catch the wise in their own craftiness. And again: The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain' (1 Cor. iii. 18-20).— 'I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones' (S. Matt. xi. 25).

(2.)

They will bring their future recompense, as being in conformity with the mind of our Lord.

'Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is sweet, and My burden light' (S. Matt. xi. 28-30).— 'Thou art My servant: I have chosen thee, and have not cast thee away. Fear not, for I am with thee: turn

not aside, for I am thy God. I have strengthened thee, and have helped thee, and the right hand of My Just One hath upheld thee' (Is. xli. 9, 10).—'That which [appeareth] foolish of God is wiser than men: and that which [appeareth] weakness of God is stronger than men. For see your vocation, brethren; that not many are wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble: but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise: and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong: and the mean things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might destroy the things that are: that no flesh should glory in His sight' (1 Cor. i. 25-29).—'I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him that made it subject in hope: because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth and is in labour even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body' (Rom. viii. 18-23).—'Behold, thy King will come to thee, the Just, and Saviour: He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass' (Zach. ix. 9. S. Matt. xxi. 5).

XLI.

THE LARK AND THE REAPER.

(Conscientious Diligence in Labour.)

THE lark had built her nest in the corn-field, and hatched her brood securely, while one hired labourer after another loitered in; but when the owner came with his sickle, it was time to get away her young; for he came in earnest to reap his field.



In the labour to which He appoints us in life, we must be zealous, and put our hearts into it: not with the spirit of hirelings, who do only as much as they cannot avoid, and merely while they are conscious of their human employer's eye.

**Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly
(Eccles. ix. 10).**

XII.

CONSCIENTIOUS DILIGENCE IN LABOUR.

(The Lark and the Reaper.)

(1.)

The spirit of conscientious labour is that which reaps-in its eternal reward.

‘He that tilleth his ground, shall be filled with bread : but he that followeth idleness, shall be filled with poverty’ (Prov. xxviii. 19).—‘Come to [Wisdom] as one that ploweth, and soweth, and wait for her good fruits. For in working about her thou shalt labour a little, and shalt quickly eat of her fruits’ (Ecclus. vi. 19, 20).—‘The wicked maketh an unsteady work : but to him that soweth justice, there is a faithful reward’ (Prov. xi. 18).—‘The fruit of the just man is a tree of life : and he that gaineth souls is wise’ (30).—‘In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening let not thy hand cease : for thou knowest not which may rather spring up, this or that : and if both together, it shall be the better’ (Eccles. xi. 6).—‘He that tilleth his land, shall make a high heap of corn : and he that worketh justice shall be exalted’ (Ecclus. xx. 30).—‘They that sow in tears, shall reap in

joy. Going they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves' (Ps. cxxv. 5-7).—'The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers unto His harvest' (S. Matt. ix. 37, 38).—'Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, patiently bearing till he receive the early and the later rain. Be you therefore also patient, and strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth near' (S. James v. 7, 8).—'I have planted, Apollo watered: but God gave the increase. So then neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth: but God who giveth the increase' (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7).—'He that ploweth should plow in hope: and he that thresheth, in hope to receive fruit' (ix. 10).—'My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord' (xv. 58).

(2.)

*According to the kind and degree of the sowing,
so will be the harvest.*

'Be not deceived: God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption: but he that soweth in the Spirit, of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting. And in doing good, let us not fail: for in due time we shall reap, not failing. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household

of the faith' (Gal. vi. 7-10).—'He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly : and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings. . . . As it is written : He hath dispersed abroad : He hath given to the poor : His justice remaineth for ever. Now He that ministereth seed to the sower, will both give you bread to eat, and will multiply your seed, and increase the growth of the fruits of your justice : that being enriched in all things, you may abound unto all bountifulness' (2 Cor. ix. 6, 8-11).—'Lift up your eyes, and see the countries, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting : that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together' (S. John iv. 35, 36).—'He who planteth, and He who watereth, are one. And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour' (1 Cor. iii. 8).—'The one an hundred fold, and another sixty, and another thirty' (S. Matt. xiii. 23).—'Sow for yourselves in justice, and reap in the mouth of mercy ; break up your fallow ground : but the time to seek the Lord is, when He shall come that shall teach you justice. You have ploughed wickedness ; you have reaped iniquity ; you have eaten the fruit of lying' (Os. x. 12, 13).—'Whose fan is in His hand, and He will purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His barn : but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire' (S. Luke iii. 17).—'In the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers : Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn ; but gather the wheat into My barn' (S. Matt. xiii. 30).

XLII.

THE POULTRY AND FIGHTING COCKS.

(Quietness amid others' Strife and Disturbance.)

Two game-cocks in a farmyard could never be at peace with one another, but were continually spurring and pecking with mutual hate; while the peaceful inhabitants of the roost wondered to see them perpetual enemies to their own content.



Activity and zeal must be accompanied by inward peace: so that, amid the discords and selfish strife which occupy the world around, we may both maintain and promote that peace and goodwill which our Lord came to bestow.

Much peace have they that love Thy law: and to them there is no stumbling-block (Ps. cxviii. 165).

XLII.

QUIETNESS AMID OTHERS' STRIFE AND DISTURBANCE.

(The Poultry and Fighting Cocks.)

(1.)

To maintain a spirit of hatred and strife is to make our present lives miserable, and to unfit ourselves for eternal happiness.

‘Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days’ (Ps. liv. 24).—‘From whence are wars and contentions among you? Come they not hence? from your concupiscences, which war in your members? You covet, and have not: you kill, and envy, and cannot obtain: you contend, and war. . . . Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the spirit covet, which dwelleth in you?’ (S. James iv. 1-5).—‘If you have bitter zeal, and there be contentions in your hearts; glory not, and be not liars against the truth. For this is not wisdom, descending from above; but earthly, sensual, diabolical. For where envying and contention

is, there is inconstancy and every evil work' (iii. 14-16). —'If you bite and eat one another; take heed that you be not consumed one by another. . . . The works of the flesh are manifest; which are, . . . enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envy, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and suchlike: of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God. . . . Let us not become desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another' (Gal. v. 15-26). —'I will not convert him: because he hath pursued his brother with the sword, and hath cast off all pity, and hath carried on his fury, and hath kept his wrath to the end' (Am. i. 11).

(2.)

We cannot prevent the enmity of such as hate us for the truth's sake.

'Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, No, but separation. For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided: three against two, and two against three shall be divided: the father against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law' (S. Luke xii. 51-53). —'I, John, your brother, and sharer in tribulation, and in the kingdom, and patience in Christ Jesus' (Apoc. i. 9). —'For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter' (Ps. xliii. 22. Rom. viii. 36). —'Princes have persecuted me without cause' (Ps. cxviii. 161).

(3.)

But our part is to be at peace with all, as an effect of our inward peace and humility.

‘If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved, but give place to wrath; for it is written: Revenge is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord’ (Rom. xii. 18, 19).—‘Much peace have they that love Thy law: and to them there is no stumbling-block’ (Ps. cxviii. 165).—‘Let us follow after the things that are of peace: and keep the things that are of edification one towards another’ (Rom. xiv. 19).—‘Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house. And if the Son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall return to you’ (S. Luke x. 5, 6).—‘Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God’ (S. Matt. v. 9).—‘The wisdom which is from above, first indeed is chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, full of mercy, and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation. And the fruit of justice is sown in peace, to them that make peace’ (S. James iii. 17, 18).—‘The fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness’ (Gal. v. 22, 23).—‘Let all bitterness, and anger, and indignation, and clamour, and blasphemy, be taken away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, merciful, forgiving one another, even as God hath forgiven you in Christ’ (Eph. iv. 31, 32).

XLIII.

THE PORCUPINE AND THE SERPENTS.

(Fearlessness and Fortitude.)

THE porcupine having fixed his haunt close by a nest of serpents, they endeavoured by threatening hisses to make him change his abode: but, invulnerable at all points, he simply opposed his prickly quills to their fangs, and remained unmoved.



While we are ready to yield what is merely our own, from a principle of mortification, charity, and detachment, we are to stand fearless and firm, against whatsoever terrors or threatenings, when the interests of our Lord and His cause are at stake.

God, who hath girt me with strength, and made my way blameless (Ps. xvii. 33).

XLIII.

FEARLESSNESS AND FORTITUDE.

(The Porcupine and the Serpents.)

(1.)

Fortitude against the powers, terrors, or influence of evil, is a gift from God.

‘God, who hath girt me with strength, and made my way blameless’ (Ps. xvii. 33).—‘That you be in nothing terrified by the adversaries; which to them is a cause of perdition, but to you of salvation, and this from God. For to you it is given for Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake’ (Phil. i. 28, 29).—‘I have made thee as a new threshing wain, with teeth like a saw: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and break them in pieces; and shalt make the hills as chaff’ (Is. xli. 15).—‘Be not afraid at their presence: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. . . . Lo, I have set thee this day over the nations, and over kingdoms, to root up, and to pull down, and to waste, and to destroy, and to build, and to plant’ (Jer. i. 8, 10).—‘Thou, O son of man, fear not, neither be thou afraid of their words: for thou art among unbelievers and destroyers, and thou

dweldest with scorpions' (Ezech. ii. 6).—'Behold, I have made thy face stronger than their faces, and thy forehead harder than their foreheads. I have made thy face like an adamant, and like flint: fear them not, neither be thou dismayed at their presence: for they are a provoking house' (iii. 8, 9).—'Brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of His power. Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the snares of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this darkness; against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Wherefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect' (Eph. vi. 10-13).—'Behold, our God, whom we worship, is able to save us from the furnace of burning fire, and to deliver us out of thy hands, O king. But if He will not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not worship thy gods, nor adore the golden statue which thou hast set up' (Dan. iii. 17, 18).—'We may confidently say: The Lord is my helper: I will not fear what man shall do unto me' (Heb. xiii. 6).—'I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one' (1 S. John ii. 14).

(2.)

It is a gift that must be prayed for, preserved, and exercised.

'Command Thy strength, O God: confirm, O God, what Thou hast wrought in us' (Ps. lxxvii. 29).—'Watch

ye; stand fast in the faith; do manfully; and be strengthened' (1 Cor. xvi. 13).—'Give not place to the devil' (Eph. iv. 27).—'Fight the good fight of faith: lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast confessed a good confession before many witnesses' (1 Tim. vi. 12).—'Having the loins of your mind girded, being sober, hope perfectly for that grace which is offered you at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (1 S. Pet. i. 13).—'Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith' (1 S. John v. 4).—'Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints' (S. Jude 3).—'Stand fast in the Lord, my most dearly beloved' (Phil. iv. 1).—'Perfect Thou my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps be not moved' (Ps. xvi. 5).—'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away' (S. Matt. xi. 12).—'Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword. . . . And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household' (x. 34, 36).—'Hating that which is evil, adhering to that which is good' (Rom. xii. 9).—'Beware, lest being led away by the error of the unwise, you fall from your own steadfastness' (2 S. Pet. iii. 17).—'He that shall overcome, and keep My works to the end, to him I will give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessel of a potter they shall be broken' (Apoc. ii. 26, 27).—'Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk, and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon' (Ps. xc. 13).

XLIV.

THE STAG FLEEING FROM THE HUNTER.

(Holy and wholesome Fear of Sin.)

THE stag, conscious that his best safety consisted in flight, instead of waiting to be brought to bay, made the best of his speed at the first sound of the hunter's horn; and by the fleetness of his limbs escaped the danger which might otherwise have been too much for him.



Christian courage, in standing against all oppositions to the attainment of our end, is never to degenerate into a rash self-confidence: recognising our weakness and liability to fall, we shall avoid, in a spirit of holy fear, the dangers we are not called to face.

That we may have the strongest comfort, who have fled for refuge, to hold fast the hope set before us (Heb. vi. 18).

XLIV.

HOLY AND WHOLESOME FEAR OF SIN.

[*The Stag fleeing from the Hunter.*]

(1.)

A spirit of holy fear is a grace from God.

‘Blessed is the man that is always fearful: but he that is hardened in mind shall fall into evil’ (Prov. xxviii. 14).—‘A wise man will fear in everything, and in the days of sins will beware of sloth’ (Ecclus. xviii. 27).—‘He shall be filled with the Spirit of the fear of the Lord’ (Is. xi. 3).—‘I will give My fear in their heart, that they may not revolt from Me’ (Jer. xxxii. 40).—‘The fear of the Lord hateth evil’ (Prov. viii. 13).—‘O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!’ (Ps. xxx. 20.)

(2.)

Especially when it arises from a sense of our own sins and weakness, and His holiness and hatred of sin.

‘If you invoke the Father, Him who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every one’s work,

converse in fear during the time of your sojourning here : knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver, . . but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled' (1 S. Pet. i. 17-19).—'Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear: for I am afraid of Thy judgments' (Ps. cxviii. 120).—'Wherefore, my dearly beloved, . . work your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will' (Phil. ii. 12, 13).—'I feared all my works, knowing that Thou didst not spare the offender' (Job ix. 28).—'I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, . . saying with a loud voice: Fear the Lord, and give Him honour; because the hour of His judgment is come' (Apoc. xiv. 6, 7).—'The Lord shall judge His people. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Heb. x. 30, 31).—'Wherefore, we . . have grace, whereby let us serve, pleasing God with fear and reverence. For our God is a consuming fire' (xii. 28, 29).

(3.)

But it is to be filial, not servile fear; accompanied by filial confidence and holy hope.

'When my spirit failed me, then Thou knewest my paths. . . I looked on my right hand, and beheld: and there was no one that would know me. Flight hath failed me: and there is no one that hath regard to my soul. I cried to Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my hope, my portion in the land of the living' (Ps. cxli. 4-6).—'My heart is troubled within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me. . . And I said: Who will give

me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest? Lo, I have gone far off, flying away: and I abode in the wilderness. I waited for Him that hath saved me from pusillanimity of spirit, and a storm' (Ps. liv. 5-9).— 'Strengthen ye the feeble hands, and confirm the weak knees. Say to the faint-hearted: Take courage, and fear not. . . God Himself will come, and will save you' (Is. xxxv. 3, 4).— 'The spirit of those that fear God, is sought after. . . For their hope is on Him that saveth them: and the eyes of God are upon them that love Him. He that feareth the Lord shall tremble at nothing, and shall not be afraid: for He is his hope' (Ecclus. xxxiv. 14-16).— 'Those whom I love, I rebuke and chastise. Be zealous, therefore, and do penance' (Apoc. iii. 19).— 'In this is the charity of God perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment: because as He is, we also are in this world. Fear is not in charity: but perfect charity casteth out fear; because fear hath pain: and he that feareth is not perfect in charity' (1 S. John iv. 17, 18).— 'You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear: but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, (Father)' (Rom. viii. 15).— 'That we may have the strongest comfort, who have fled for refuge, to hold-fast the hope set before us' (Heb. vi. 18).— 'Flee away, O my beloved: and be like to the roe, and to the young hart upon the mountains' (Cant. viii. 14).

XLV.

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE WOLF.

(Fidelity to Pastoral Guidance.)

SOME shepherds, having caught a wolf in the sheepfold disguised in sheep's clothing, gave him without remorse or delay the fate he had deserved : hanging him up as a warning to all who might follow him in the same disguise and traitorous purpose.



The more truly desirous we are to attain the end of our existence, and to use all the means to it, the more we shall value the ministry left by our Lord in His Church for our benefit, and the pastoral solicitude of His priests to guard and warn, as well as to guide and feed us.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves (*S. Matt. vii. 15*).

XLV.

FIDELITY TO PASTORAL GUIDANCE.

(The Shepherds and the Wolf.)

(1.)

The Good Shepherd of the flock has given to the pastors who represent Him the charge of feeding and defending His sheep.

‘O son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word from My mouth, and shalt tell it them from Me. When I say to the wicked: O wicked man, thou shalt surely die: if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked man from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity: but I will require his blood at thy hand. But if thou tell the wicked man, that he may be converted from his ways, and he be not converted from his ways; he shall die in his iniquity: but thou hast delivered thy soul’ (Ezech. xxxiii. 7-9).—‘Where is the flock that is given thee, thy beautiful cattle?’ (Jer. xiii. 20).—‘They shall teach My people the difference between holy and profane, and show them how to discern between clean and unclean. And when there shall be a controversy, they shall stand in My judgments, and shall judge’ (Ezech. xliv. 23, 24).—‘I will give you pastors accord-

ing to My own heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and doctrine' (Jer. iii. 15).—'For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge; and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is the Angel of the Lord of hosts' (Mal. ii. 7).—'And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren' (S. Luke xxii. 31, 32).—'Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him the third time: Simon son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved, because He said to him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep' (S. John xxi. 15-17).

(2.)

This charge includes the duty of taking away out of the flock all that would harm or destroy them.

'If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican. Amen I say to you; Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven' (S. Matt. xviii. 17,

18).—‘What will you? shall I come to you with a rod, or in charity, and in the spirit of meekness?’ (1 Cor. iv. 21).—‘I indeed . . . have already judged . . . him that hath so done: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (v. 3-5).—‘Having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be fulfilled. . . For if I also should boast somewhat more of our power, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed’ (2 Cor. x. 6, 8).—‘I have told you before, and foretell, . . . to them that sinned before, and to all the rest, that, if I come again, I will not spare. Do you seek a proof of Christ who speaketh in me, who towards you is not weak, but is mighty in you?’ (xiii. 2, 3).—‘I would they were even cut off, who trouble you’ (Gal. v. 12).—‘Whom I have delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme’ (1 Tim. i. 20).—‘Them that sin, reprove before all; that the rest also may have fear. I charge thee before God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by declining to either side’ (v. 20, 21).—‘Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves’ (S. Matt. vii. 15).—‘I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in My Name . . . what hath the chaff to do with the wheat, saith the Lord? Are not My words as a fire? saith the Lord; and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? . . . Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord; who use their tongues, and say: *The Lord saith it*’ (Jer. xxiii. 25-31).

XLVI.

THE EAGLE, THE LAMB, AND THE CROW.

(Avoidance of Presumption in Undertakings.)

A CROW, observing the eagle pounce on a lamb and fly away with it, thought to imitate the king of birds without possessing his strength: so, entangling his claws in the fleece of another of the flock, he fell an easy prey to the angry shepherd.



As a chief part of the care we must have to attain to our end, we are to test and ascertain the special vocation given or offered to us: fulfilling it with fidelity and courage, but preserved from such disasters as they invite, who undertake enterprises without being called to them.

Every one hath his proper gift from God: one after *this manner*, and another after that (1 Cor. vii. 7).

XLVI.

AVOIDANCE OF PRESUMPTION IN UNDERTAKINGS.

(The Eagle, the Lamb, and the Crow.)

(1.)

We are to be faithful and courageous in whatsoever we are truly called to do.

‘According as God hath divided to every one the measure of faith. . . Having gifts different, according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, according to the proportion of faith, or ministry, in ministering : or he that teacheth, in teaching ; he that exhorteth, in exhorting ; he that giveth, with simplicity ; he that ruleth, with solicitude ; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness’ (Rom. xii. 3-8).—‘As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God . . . that in all things God may be honoured through Jesus Christ’ (1 S. Pet. iv. 10, 11).—‘There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit : and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all’ (1 Cor. xii. 4-6).—‘Therefore, seeing we have this ministration, according as we have obtained mercy, we faint not’ (2 Cor. iv. 1).—‘Come, and I will send thee to

Pharao, that thou mayest bring forth My people . . and Moses said to God: Who am I, that I should go to Pharao, and should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And He said to him: I will be with thee. . . Moses said: I beseech Thee, Lord, I am not eloquent. . . The Lord said to him: Who made man's mouth? . . Go therefore, and I will be in thy mouth: and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak. But he said: I beseech Thee, Lord, send whom Thou wilt send (Exod. iii. 10-12, iv. 10-13).—‘I sanctified thee, and made thee a prophet unto the nations. And I said: Ah, ah, ah, Lord God: behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child. And the Lord said to me: Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee: and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak’ (Jer. i. 5-7).—‘You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain’ (S. John xv. 16).—‘Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called’ (1 Cor. vii. 20).—‘Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find’ (S. John xxi. 6).

(2.)

But we must avoid the presumption of thrusting ourselves into employments and responsibilities for which we have no special grace of vocation.

‘There was a great overthrow of the people, because they did not hearken to Judas and his brethren, thinking that they should do manfully. But they were not of the seed of those men by whom salvation was brought to Israel. . . In that day, some priests fell in battle, while,

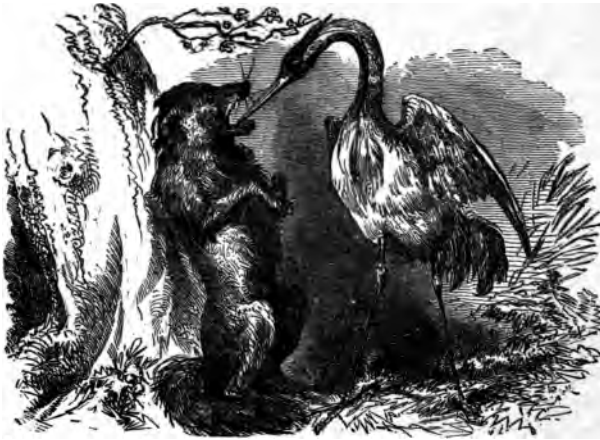
desiring to do manfully, they went out unadvisedly to fight' (1 Mach. v. 60-7).—'So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me' (S. John xxi. 22).—'O shepherd, and idol, that forsaketh the flock; the sword upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall quite wither away, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened' (Zach. xi. 17).—'Saul clothed David with his garments, and put a helmet of brass upon his head, and armed him with a coat of mail. And David having girded his sword upon his armour, began to try if he could walk in armour: for he was not accustomed to it. And David said to Saul: I cannot go thus, for I am not used to it. And he laid them off; and he took his staff, which he had always in his hands: and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them into the shepherd's scrip, which he had with him: and he took a sling in his hand, and went forth against the Philistine' (1 Kings xvii. 38-40).—'Some of the Jewish exorcists, who went about, attempted to invoke, over them that had evil spirits, the Name of the Lord Jesus, saying: I conjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. And there were certain men, seven sons of Sceva a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. But an evil spirit answering, said to them: Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaping upon them, and mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house, naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and the Gentiles who dwelt at Ephesus: and fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified' (Acts xix. 13-17).

XLVII.

THE CRANE AND THE WOLF.

(Readiness to help the Unthankful and Evil.)

A WOLF, who in gorging his prey had got a bone that stuck in his throat and was choking him, piteously begged the crane to pull it out: a good office which the bird could not refuse, though he well knew the wolf would not even thank him for it.



We are to set no limits, except what charity and prudence may dictate, to our endeavours to do acts of kindness; ready to perform any service to which supernatural motives may invite us, though foreseeing the ingratitude we shall probably experience.

Do good, and lend; hoping for nothing thereby: and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Most High (S. Luke vi. 35).

XLVII.

READINESS TO HELP THE UNTHANKFUL AND EVIL.

(The Crane and the Wolf.)

(1.)

We should always be ready to give any aid, or impart any benefit, in our power.

‘Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. . . Give, and it shall be given to you : good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall measure, it shall be measured to you again’ (S. Luke vi. 36, 38).—‘Communicating to the necessities of the Saints : pursuing hospitality’ (Rom. xii. 13).—‘Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward’ (S. Matt. x. 42).—‘Whilst we have time, let us do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith’ (Gal. vi. 10).—‘Purifying your souls in the obedience of charity, with a brotherly love, from a sincere heart love one another earnestly’ (1 S. Pet. i. 22).—‘Let fraternal charity abide

in you. . . Do not forget to do good, and to impart: for by such sacrifices God's favour is obtained' (Heb. xiii. 1, 16).—'He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings. Every one, as he hath determined in his heart, not with sadness, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver' (2 Cor. ix. 6, 7).—'Using hospitality toward one another, without murmuring' (1 S. Pet. iv. 9).—'Redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor: perhaps He will forgive thy offences' (Dan. iv. 24).—'Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?' (Mal. ii. 10).—'Let every one of you please his neighbour for his good, unto edification. For Christ did not please Himself: but, as it is written: The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on Me' (Rom. xv. 2, 3).

(2.)

And this, not only to the good, but to the evil, and such as will be personally ungrateful for our benefits.

'I say to you that hear: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you; and pray for them that calumniate you. And to him that striketh thee on the one cheek, offer also the other. And him that taketh away from thee thy cloak, hinder not to take thy coat also. Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them *not again*. And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner. And if you

love them that love you, what thanks have you? for sinners also love those that love them. And if you do good to them who do good to you, what thanks have you? for sinners also do this. And if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? for sinners also lend to sinners, for to receive as much. But love ye your enemies: do good, and lend; hoping for nothing thereby: and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Most High: for He is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye, therefore, merciful, as your Father also is merciful' (S. Luke vi. 27-36).—'Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of mildness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens; and so shall you fulfil the law of Christ' (Gal. vi. 1, 2).—'Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (1 Cor. xiii. 4-7).—'If thy brother sin against thee, reprove him: and if he do penance, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent: forgive him' (S. Luke xvii. 3, 4).—'Bless them that persecute you: bless, and curse not. If thine enemy be hungry, give him to eat: if he thirst, give him drink: for, doing this, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good' (Rom. xii. 14, 20, 21).

XLVIII.

THE STAGS IN THE WILDERNESS.

(Fervent Spiritual Desires.)

THE stags in the wilderness, parched with thirst, felt an intense and eager desire for the fresh springs awaiting them in the distance ; the moment their instinct taught them in which direction the waters lay, they sped on to slake their thirst and preserve their lives.



Our efforts to cleanse our hearts and lives from all that would mar the end of our creation, and to follow the example of our Lord on earth, must be animated by fervent desires of being with Him in heaven, and thus attaining our true and final end hereafter.

As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God (Ps. xli. 1).

XLVIII.

FERVENT SPIRITUAL DESIRES.

(The Stags in the Wilderness.)

(1.)

The soul is happy if it aspire after God, with a spiritual thirst for His grace, and conformity to Him.

‘Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall be filled’ (S. Matt. v. 6).—‘As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?’ (Ps. xli. 1-3).—‘My soul hath fainted after Thy salvation: and in Thy word have I very much hoped. My eyes have failed for Thy word, saying: When wilt Thou comfort me? . . . My eyes have fainted after Thy salvation, and for the word of Thy justice’ (Ps. cxviii. 81, 82, 123).—‘I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord: and Thy law is my meditation’ (174).—‘I opened my mouth, and panted: because I longed for Thy commandments’ (131).—‘My soul hath desired Thee in the night: yea, and with my spirit within me, in the morning early, I will watch to Thee’ (Is. xxvi. 9).—‘O God my God, to Thee do I watch at

XLVI.

THE EAGLE, THE LAMB, AND THE CROW.

(Avoidance of Presumption in Undertakings.)

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(The Eagle, the Lamb, and the Crow.)

(1.)

We are to be faithful and courageous in whatsoever we are truly called to do.

‘According as God hath divided to every one the measure of faith. . . Having gifts different, according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, according to the proportion of faith, or ministry, in ministering : or he that teacheth, in teaching ; he that exhorteth, in exhorting ; he that giveth, with simplicity ; he that ruleth, with solicitude ; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness’ (Rom. xii. 3-8).—‘As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God . . . that in all things God may be honoured through Jesus Christ’ (1 S. Pet. iv. 10, 11).—‘There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit : and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all’ (1 Cor. xii. 4-6).—‘Therefore, seeing we have this ministration, according as we have obtained mercy, we faint not’ (2 Cor. iv. 1).—‘Come, and I will send thee to

Pharao, that thou mayest bring forth My people . . and Moses said to God: Who am I, that I should go to Pharao, and should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And He said to him: I will be with thee. . . Moses said: I beseech Thee, Lord, I am not eloquent. . . The Lord said to him: Who made man's mouth? . . Go therefore, and I will be in thy mouth: and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak. But he said: I beseech Thee, Lord, send whom Thou wilt send (Exod. iii. 10-12, iv. 10-13).—‘I sanctified thee, and made thee a prophet unto the nations. And I said: Ah, ah, ah, Lord God: behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child. And the Lord said to me: Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee: and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak’ (Jer. i. 5-7).—‘You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain’ (S. John xv. 16).—‘Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called’ (1 Cor. vii. 20).—‘Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find’ (S. John xxi. 6).

(2.)

But we must avoid the presumption of thrusting ourselves into employments and responsibilities for which we have no special grace of vocation.

‘There was a great overthrow of the people, because they did not hearken to Judas and his brethren, thinking that they should do manfully. But they were not of the seed of those men by whom salvation was brought to Israel. . . In that day, some priests fell in battle, while,

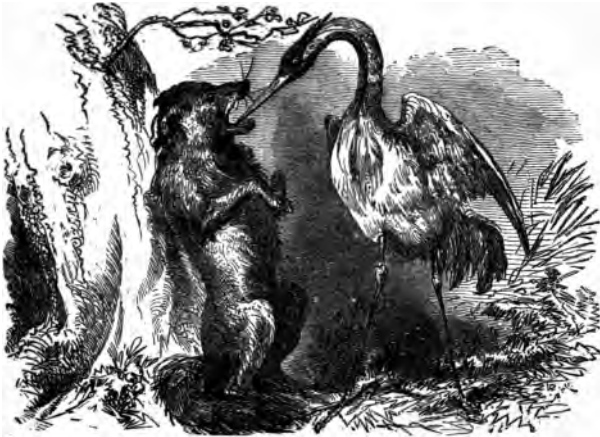
desiring to do manfully, they went out unadvisedly to fight' (1 Mach. v. 60-7).—'So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me' (S. John xxi. 22).—'O shepherd, and idol, that forsaketh the flock; the sword upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall quite wither away, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened' (Zach. xi. 17).—'Saul clothed David with his garments, and put a helmet of brass upon his head, and armed him with a coat of mail. And David having girded his sword upon his armour, began to try if he could walk in armour: for he was not accustomed to it. And David said to Saul: I cannot go thus, for I am not used to it. And he laid them off; and he took his staff, which he had always in his hands: and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them into the shepherd's scrip, which he had with him: and he took a sling in his hand, and went forth against the Philistine' (1 Kings xvii. 38-40).—'Some of the Jewish exorcists, who went about, attempted to invoke, over them that had evil spirits, the Name of the Lord Jesus, saying: I conjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. And there were certain men, seven sons of Sceva a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. But an evil spirit answering, said to them: Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaping upon them, and mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house, naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and the Gentiles who dwelt at Ephesus: and fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified' (Acts xix. 13-17).

XLVII.

THE CRANE AND THE WOLF.

(Readiness to help the Unthankful and Evil.)

A WOLF, who in gorging his prey had got a bone that stuck in his throat and was choking him, piteously begged the crane to pull it out: a good office which the bird could not refuse, though he well knew the wolf would not even thank him for it.



We are to set no limits, except what charity and prudence may dictate, to our endeavours to do acts of kindness; ready to perform any service to which supernatural motives may invite us, though foreseeing the ingratitude we shall probably experience.

Do good, and lend; hoping for nothing thereby: and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Most High (S. Luke vi. 35).

XLVII.

READINESS TO HELP THE UNTHANKFUL AND EVIL.

(The Crane and the Wolf.)

(1.)

We should always be ready to give any aid, or impart any benefit, in our power.

‘Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. . . Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall measure, it shall be measured to you again’ (S. Luke vi. 36, 38).—‘Communicating to the necessities of the Saints: pursuing hospitality’ (Rom. xii. 13).—‘Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward’ (S. Matt. x. 42).—‘Whilst we have time, let us do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith’ (Gal. vi. 10).—‘Purifying your souls in the obedience of charity, with a brotherly love, from a sincere heart love one another earnestly’ (1 S. Pet. i. 22).—‘Let fraternal charity abide

in you. . . Do not forget to do good, and to impart: for by such sacrifices God's favour is obtained' (Heb. xiii. 1, 16).—'He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings. Every one, as he hath determined in his heart, not with sadness, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver' (2 Cor. ix. 6, 7).—'Using hospitality toward one another, without murmuring' (1 S. Pet. iv. 9).—'Redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor: perhaps He will forgive thy offences' (Dan. iv. 24).—'Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?' (Mal. ii. 10).—'Let every one of you please his neighbour for his good, unto edification. For Christ did not please Himself: but, as it is written: The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on Me' (Rom. xv. 2, 3).

(2.)

And this, not only to the good, but to the evil, and such as will be personally ungrateful for our benefits.

'I say to you that hear: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you; and pray for them that calumniate you. And to him that striketh thee on the one cheek, offer also the other. And him that taketh away from thee thy cloak, hinder not to take thy coat also. Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again. And as you would that men should do to you also to them in like manner. And if you

love them that love you, what thanks have you? for sinners also love those that love them. And if you do good to them who do good to you, what thanks have you? for sinners also do this. And if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? for sinners also lend to sinners, for to receive as much. But love ye your enemies: do good, and lend; hoping for nothing thereby: and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Most High: for He is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye, therefore, merciful, as your Father also is merciful' (S. Luke vi. 27-36).—'Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of mildness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens; and so shall you fulfil the law of Christ' (Gal. vi. 1, 2).—'Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (1 Cor. xiii. 4-7).—'If thy brother sin against thee, reprove him: and if he do penance, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent: forgive him' (S. Luke xvii. 3, 4).—'Bless them that persecute you: bless, and curse not. If thine enemy be hungry, give him to eat: if he thirst, give him drink: for, doing this, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good' (Rom. xii. 14, 20, 21).

XLVIII.

THE STAGS IN THE WILDERNESS.

(Fercent Spiritual Desires.)

THE stags in the wilderness, parched with thirst, felt an intense and eager desire for the fresh springs awaiting them in the distance : the moment their instinct taught them in which direction the waters lay, they sped on to slake their thirst and preserve their lives.



Our efforts to cleanse our hearts and lives from all that would mar the end of our creation, and to follow the example of our Lord on earth, must be animated by fercent desires of being with Him in heaven, and thus attaining our true and final end hereafter.

As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God (Ps. xli. 1).

XLVIII.

FERVENT SPIRITUAL DESIRES.

(The Stags in the Wilderness.)

(1.)

The soul is happy if it aspire after God, with a spiritual thirst for His grace, and conformity to Him.

‘Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall be filled’ (S. Matt. v. 6).—‘As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?’ (Ps. xli. 1-3).—‘My soul hath fainted after Thy salvation: and in Thy word have I very much hoped. My eyes have failed for Thy word, saying: When wilt Thou comfort me? . . . My eyes have fainted after Thy salvation, and for the word of Thy justice’ (Ps. cxviii. 81, 82, 123).—‘I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord: and Thy law is my meditation’ (174).—‘I opened my mouth, and panted: because I longed for Thy commandments’ (131).—‘My soul hath desired Thee in the night: yea, and with my spirit within me, in the morning early, I will watch to Thee’ (Is. xxvi. 9).—‘O God my God, to Thee do I watch ~~at~~



buy wine and milk without price' (lv. 1).—'If any man Me, and drink' (S. John vii. 37).—'I will give of the fountain of life' (Apoc. xxi. 6, cf. xxii. 17).—'My desires: peace be to thee' (Dan. x. 19).—'I will be inebriated with the plenty of Thy goodness, and Thou shalt make them drink of the fountain of Thy goodness.'—'All drank the same spiritual drink of the spiritual Rock that followeth Me (the Rock was Christ)' (1 Cor. x. 4).—'I will show the gift of God, and who it is that I have given Me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst not, and He would have given thee living water, that shall drink of the water that I shall give, shall thirst for ever: but the water that I shall give, shall become in him a fountain of water, that shall give him everlasting life' (S. John iv. 10, 13, 14).—'I will not hunger, nor thirst any more; neither shall heat fall on them, nor any heat: for they shall be in the midst of the throne, shall rule over the nations, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes' (S. John vi. 16, 17).—'I will pour out waters upon the dry land, and streams upon the dry land: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thee, and they shall spring up among the trees, and beside the running waters' (Is. xlv. 3, 4).

break of day. For Thee my soul hath thirsted; for Thee my flesh, O how many ways! In a desert land, and where there is no way, and no water: so in the sanctuary have I come before Thee, to see Thy power and Thy glory. For Thy mercy is better than lives: Thee my lips shall praise' (Ps. lxii. 1-4).—'What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? My flesh and my heart have fainted away: Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever' (lxxii. 25, 26).—'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (S. Luke xii. 34).—'I stretched forth my hands to Thee: my soul is as earth without water unto Thee. Hear me speedily, O Lord; my spirit hath fainted away' (Ps. cxlii. 6, 7).—'Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He was speaking in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?' (S. Luke xxiv. 32).—'My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out' (Ps. xxxviii. 4).—'I remembered God, and was delighted; and was exercised; and my spirit swooned away' (lxxvi. 4).

(2.)

This spiritual thirst will be rewarded and satisfied by God who bestows it.

'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it' (Ps. lxxx. 11).—'The needy and the poor seek for waters, and there are none: their tongue hath been dry with thirst. I, the Lord, will hear them: I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them' (Is. xli. 17).—'All you that thirst, come to the waters: and you that have no money, make haste,

buy, and eat : come ye, buy wine and milk without money, and without any price' (lv. 1).—'If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink' (S. John vii. 37).—'To him that thirsteth I will give of the fountain of the water of life gratis' (Apoc. xxi. 6, cf. xxii. 17).—'Fear not, O man of desires : peace be to thee' (Dan. x. 19).—'They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house : and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fountain of life' (Ps. xxxv. 9, 10).—'All drank the same spiritual drink : (and they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them : and the Rock was Christ)' (1 Cor. x. 4).—'If thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give Me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. . . He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever : but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto everlasting life' (S. John iv. 10, 13, 14).—'They shall not hunger, nor thirst any more ; neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat : for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes' (Apoc. vii. 16, 17).—'I will pour out waters upon the thirsty ground, and streams upon the dry land : I will pour out My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy stock. And they shall spring up among the herbs, as willows beside the running waters' (Is. xlv. 3, 4).

XLIX.

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.

(Perseverance to the End.)

THE hare, swift, agile, and inconstant, challenged the tortoise to a race, from mere sport and wanton contempt : but sitting down after a few jumps, and nodding off to sleep, found, on waking, that the slow and persevering tortoise had plodded on, and gained the goal.



In order to attain this blessed consummation, which is at once a maturity and a reward, we need efforts, acts, victories, habits, and prayers, persevered in to the end ; each successive step, though toilsome and slow, approaching to our secure and final triumph.

*He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved.
(S. Matt. x. 22).*

XLIX.

PERSEVERANCE TO THE END.

(The Hare and the Tortoise.)

(1.)

Good beginnings are only to be valued so far as they promise and lead to a good end.

‘No man, putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God’ (S. Luke ix. 62).—‘I will destroy out of this place . . . them that turn away from following after the Lord, and that have not sought the Lord, nor searched after Him’ (Soph. i. 4, 6).—‘All the foolish of heart were troubled. They have slept their sleep : and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands’ (Ps. lxxv. 5, 6).—‘He that did prevail hath failed ; the scorner is consumed’ (Is. xxix. 20).—‘I passed by the field of the slothful man, and by the vineyard of the foolish man ; and behold, it was all filled with nettles ; and thorns had covered the face thereof : and the stone wall was broken down. Which, when I had seen, I laid it up in my heart ; and by the example I received instruction. Thou wilt sleep a little, said I : thou wilt slumber a little ; thou wilt fold thy hands a little to rest : and poverty shall come to thee as

a runner, and beggary as an armed man' (Prov. xxiv. 30-34).—'Know you not, that they who run in the race, all run, indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that you may obtain. . . I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate' (1 Cor. ix. 24-27).—'You did run well: who hath hindered you that you should not obey the truth? This persuasion is not from Him that calleth you' (Gal. v. 7, 8).—'Strive to enter by the narrow gate: for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able. But when the master of the house shall be gone in, and shall shut the door, you shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying: Lord, open to us: and He answering shall say to you: I know you not whence you are' (S. Luke xiii. 24, 25).—'And behold, they are last who shall be first, and they are first who shall be last' (30).—'This I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first charity. Be mindful therefore from whence thou art fallen, and do penance, and do the first works. Or else I come to thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place' (Apoc. ii. 4, 5).—'When the just turneth himself away from his justice, and committeth iniquity, he shall die therein' (Ezech. xviii. 26).—'Look to yourselves, that you lose not the things which you have wrought, but that you may receive a full reward. Whosoever recedeth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God' (2 S. John, 8, 9).—'I turned me to another thing; and I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the *strong*' (Eccles. ix. 11).

(2.)

In the race for life eternal, steadfastness and perseverance gain the prize against more brilliant qualities.

‘Laying aside every weight, and the sin that surroundeth us, by patience let us run to the fight proposed to us’ (Heb. xii. 1).—‘If by any means I may attain to the resurrection which is from the dead: not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may by any means apprehend that in which I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing [I do;] forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I pursue toward the mark, for the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus’ (Phil. iii. 11-14).—‘The weak are girt with strength. He will keep the feet of His Saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; because no man shall prevail by his own strength’ (1 Kings ii. 4, 9).—‘The just man shall hold on his way: and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger’ (Job xvii. 9).—‘He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved’ (S. Matt. xxiv. 13).—‘That which you have, hold fast till I come. And he that shall overcome, and keep My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations’ (Apoc. ii. 25, 26).—‘Who will render to every man according to his works: to them indeed, who, according to patience in good work, seek glory and honour and incorruption, life everlasting’ (Rom. ii. 6, 7).

L.

THE SUN AND THE WIND.

(Joy in the Lord.)

THE sun and the wind, having each asserted the supremacy of its influence, agreed to test their powers on a traveller: while the wind's most violent efforts only made him wrap his cloak tightly round him, one smile of the sun at once caused him to throw it aside.



The bliss eternal, awaiting those who persevere to the end, will be the consummation of such glimpses and foretastes as our Lord affords us in spiritual consolations here below, to cheer and help us on our way to Himself, our exceeding great reward.

Thou shalt abound in delights in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face to God (Job xxii. 26).

I.

JOY IN THE LORD.

(The Sun and the Wind.)

(1.)

The love of God, which prompts to a loving obedience, is the happiness of the soul here in pilgrimage.

‘I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love’ (Os. xi. 4).—‘I walked at large, because I have sought after Thy commandments’ (Ps. cxviii. 45).—‘Let the brightness of the Lord our God be upon us : and direct Thou the work of our hands over us ; yea, the work of our hands do Thou direct’ (lxxxix. 17).—‘O let Thy mercy be for my comfort, according to Thy word unto Thy servant’ (cxviii. 76).—‘Light is risen to the just, and joy to the right of heart. Rejoice, ye just, in the Lord : and give praise to the remembrance of His holiness’ (xcvi. 11, 12).—‘Conduct me, O Lord, in Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth : let my heart rejoice, that it may fear Thy name’ (lxxxv. 11).—‘Come ye to Him, and be enlightened : and your faces shall not be confounded’ (xxxiii. 6).—‘I set the Lord always in my sight : for He is at my right hand, that I be not moved. Therefore my heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced : moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope’ (xv.

8, 9).—‘Let all that seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee : and let such as love Thy salvation say always : The Lord be magnified’ (xxxix. 17).—‘Blessed is the people that knoweth jubilation. They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance ; and in Thy Name they shall rejoice all the day, and in Thy justice they shall be exalted. For Thou art the glory of their strength : and in Thy good pleasure shall our horn be exalted’ (lxxxviii. 16, 17).—‘Then shalt thou abound in delights in the Almighty, and shalt lift up Thy face to God. Thou shalt pray to Him, and He will hear Thee : and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall come to thee ; and light shall shine in thy ways’ (Job xxii. 26-28).—‘He shall pray to God, and He will be gracious to him : and he shall see His face with joy’ (xxxiii. 26).—‘Rejoicing in hope’ (Rom. xii. 12).—‘We . . . glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God’ (v. 2).—‘The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; He will save : He will rejoice over thee with gladness ; He will be silent in His love ; He will be joyful over thee in praise’ (Soph. iii. 17).

(2.)

It is a pledge and foretaste of the happiness awaiting the soul ; of the consummation, in eternity, of the end of its creation.

‘Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things that appear not’ (Heb. xi. 1).—‘When that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away. We see now through a glass in an *obscure manner* ; but then face to face. Now I know *in part* : but then I shall know even as I am known.

And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity' (1 Cor. xiii. 10-13).—'Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God: and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him, sanctifieth himself, as He also is holy' (1 S. John iii. 2, 3).—'Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father' (S. Matt. xiii. 43).—'They that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity' (Dan. xii. 3).—'Neither can they die any more; for they are all equal to Angels, and are the children of God, since they are the children of resurrection' (S. Luke xx. 36).—'Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, because your reward is very great in heaven' (S. Matt. v. 12).—'For the hope that is laid up for you in heaven: which you have heard in the word of the truth of the gospel' (Col. i. 5).—'Glorious things are said of thee, O City of God' (Ps. lxxxvi. 3).—'The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit' (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10).—'As for me, I will appear before Thy sight in justice: I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear' (Ps. xvi. 15).—'I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord' (cxxi. 1).—'In My Father's house there are many mansions. . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to Myself: that where I am, you also may be. And whither

I go, you know, and the way you know' (S. John xiv. 2-4).—'I appoint to you, as My Father has appointed to Me, a kingdom: that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom' (S. Luke xxii. 29, 30).—'I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me, who feedeth among the lilies' (Cant. vi. 2).—'Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (S. Matt. xxv. 34).—'To him that shall overcome, I will grant to sit with Me in My throne: as I also have overcome, and have sat with My Father in His throne' (Apoc. iii. 21).—'When this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?' (1 Cor. xv. 54, 55).—'When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then shall you also appear with Him in glory' (Col. iii. 4).—'Our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we wait for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the Body of His glory, according to the operation whereby also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself' (Phil. iii. 20, 21).—'We who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet Christ in the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort ye one another with these words' (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

THE END.



1





